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ABSTRACT

This issue of the "Journal of Children and Youth" focuses on children's strategies for decoding and comprehending written language and teacher's strategies for facilitating this process. The issue includes eleven papers by members of the Indiana Reading Professors division of the Indiana State Reading Council and several invited guests. Peggy Ransom and Timothy Krenzke examine the influence of parents on the affective domain of children--an area receiving renewed emphasis in the last five years. Vanita Gibbs discusses children's needs as they enter the formal reading program. Ruth Holland focuses on comprehension strategies at the word level. Lynn and Lawrence Smith investigate the effect of using advance organizers on children's comprehension strategies. William Powell gives insight into measuring specific strategies through the informal reading inventory. Donna Norton studies the effect of specific reading programs on strategies and Rexel Brown discusses a parallel study that investigated the effects of teacher pupil theoretical orientation. Adjustments in the informal reading inventory are discussed by Brown in a second article which also includes an investigation of changing teachers' grading philosophies. John Davis investigates teachers' ability to use the decoding skills they will teach. Finally, Michael Tulley looks to reading strategies of the future. In addition, the issue includes an article by Glenn Pate, not related to the theme, which is titled Guaranteeing Understanding Between Teachers and Students. (Author/SS)

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH

"Children's Reading Strategies"

Rexel E. Brown, University of Evansville, Guest Editor
Winter, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

by

Rexel E. Brown
University of Evansville

As we approach a clearer understanding of the reading process, reading authorities are beginning to investigate more deeply the strategies used by children as they decode and comprehend written language. In this issue, analysis of these specific strategies, how developed and how measured, is the primary focus. Members of the Indiana Reading Professors, a part of the Indiana State Reading Council, and invited guests examine the research, techniques, and development of specific strategies used by children and by the teachers who teach them.

Ransom and Krenzke examined the influence of parents on the affective domain of children--an area receiving renewed emphasis in the last five years. Gibbs discusses children's needs as they enter the formal reading program. Holland focuses on comprehension strategies at the word level. The Smiths' investigate the use of advance organizers on children's comprehension strategies. Powell gives insight into measuring specific strategies through the informal reading inventory. Norton studies the effect of specific reading programs on strategies and Brown discusses a parallel study that investigated the teacher and pupil orientation and how it affects their teaching and use of these strategies. Adjustments in the informal reading inventory are discussed by Brown in a second article which also includes an investigation of changing teacher's grading philosophy. Davis also investigates teacher's ability to use the decoding skills they will teach. Tulley looks to reading strategies of the future.

All of the studies open new doors for investigation of the way children go about learning the very complex task of reading and of the teachers who have been given the responsibility of directing them in this effort. As with all papers and studies they leave a myriad of unanswered questions and future research topics. If the articles stimulate further investigation, this issue of the journal will have fulfilled its purpose.

Reading and the Affective Domain
Pre-elementary

by

Dr. Peggy E. Ranson
and
Timothy L. Krenzke
Ball State University

Reading has been given many definitions by educators and laymen, depending on which elements or combination of elements one thinks is important in the reading process. For instance, Flesch (1955) would define reading as just getting meaning from certain combinations of letters, which is emphasizing the decoding element. Strickland (1969) defines reading as a complex mental process that involves the doing of several things simultaneously, which indicates the reading processes of decoding and encoding. Karlin (1975) also would include the processes of decoding and encoding from his definition that reading is thinking and reconstructing the ideas of others. He also infers that there is a process of affective thinking process in his definition. Barrett (1969) not only defines reading to include the two reading processes of perceptual skills and cognitive skills of reading but adds the affective goal as another strand in the reading process. "The affective goals are concerned with the feelings children have toward reading." (1969, p. 30). Other educators during the 70's are also focusing on three processes in learning to read. They also are emphasizing the affective domain can be a process developed before a child enters school. The affective domain, of course, will be the foundation for the decoding and encoding reading processes.

Reflecting on this affective domain, Ransom (1978) says:

> A child's emotions play an important part in his learning to read, too. If he feels secure, happy about himself, and interested in learning to read, the chances are good that he will. But emotions like anxiety, low self-esteem, fear of failure, or boredom with school may inhibit the learning process. You may have to help children deal with them.

Most educators would accept the proposition that parents have considerable influence on the reading habits of children before they enter school as well as into the elementary school years. Research tends to bear this out. Over fifty years ago, Cartwright and Brueckner (1928) found that the availability of books in the home was an important factor in promoting reading interest. Milner (1951) found a significant relationship between the number of books children owned and readiness for reading and Sutton (1964) found that children who were ready to read were read to extensively by parents and older siblings.

In the last years, more and more writings are focused on parent helping their children at home in order for the child to be a better reader. The

focusing elements of language, physical attention, attitudes, emotions and values are parts of the affective domain.

In this article the influence of parents on children and the affective domain will be discussed.

The decisions that parents make as the heads of individual families have far reaching implementations. These decisions, such as allowing time where parents read to their children, helping children select books, playing games to develop language, serving as a reading model, should be from a knowledge that these decisions do have a great influence later in the child's life in learning to read in school. These parents are important and do have a role of a teacher of reading in their homes. (Strickland, 1978).

It is difficult to separate affective domain elements, such as attitudes, from the emotions, from the physical attention, and from language, because they are interrelated and are really not absolute isolated areas. However, in the following pages, these areas will be separated as much as possible but one must keep in mind that they are interrelated.

Language

The parents greatest contribution to their children can be in the guidance and development of the language. Language and field experiences background are most important toward a child learning to read. Both the development of language, which can be further developed by taking trips in a community, are part of developing the affective domain. They are developed before children enter school and do have an important part in children learning to read.

In the home the parent should be aware of the physical development of children. This means throwing and catching balls, skipping, jumping, playing out and indoor games, and all types of methods utilizing the use of the body. It is known that not being able to do these types of physical activities hinders children in learning to read; however, it is also known that even if children learn the physical activities, it does not result in excellent readers in school. One of the first areas an educator can discuss with parents is whether their child has had a thorough physical examination. So often it is found that eye sight, or hearing, or some physical problem is the cause for the child not developing the affective domain, and it is too often forgotten to guide a parent to this simple solution.

Emotions

Children are born with the ability to feel and express certain emotions, from comfort and pleasure when the need is for love and physical attention are satisfied, to anger and fear with interference with these satisfactions. Erikson (1963) and Maslow (1954) believe that children pass through stages toward healthful emotional responses and self-concepts and if children do not develop one stage they are crippled and cannot pass on to the next stage. Most of this development, which affect the affective domain, depend on the home environment.

Erikson's Stages of Personality Development	
Infancy	Trust Autonomy Initiative and Imagination

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	
Infancy	Physiological Needs Safety Needs Love and Belonging Needs Esteem Needs Self-Actualization Needs Needs to Know and Understand

Parents should give the feeling of security to children, which comes from trust, physical safety and fulfillment of the need for love and belonging, or the child will feel angry, fearful, and unloved. Without the positive development, in the preschool years, children come to school with negative self-concepts, and high anxieties, which does not help them in learning to read, and results in a negative approach toward developing the affective domain.

Attitudes and Values

Attitudes and values are learned. The children's attitudes and values will depend greatly on the parents' values, and are developed before children enter school. Ringness (1975) in the book, The Affective Domain in Education states:

> We can help children to learn and to explore, to seek ways of behaving that will satisfy them as individuals, as well as satisfy and improve society. Inadequate or maladaptive behavior can be corrected. New, more useful behavior can be encouraged. We need to help children to understand themselves better, to understand others, to determine how they feel, how they got that way, what alternative they can muster, and to project the consequences of their feelings and points of view.

Parents attitudes and values should be such as to instill in their children that reading can be a joy, just as teachers should believe this too. The building of attitudes that reading really can be fun does start in the home. Reading to children is the basis of developing this attitude, so that children begin to see that stories or books can be fun. The second, and just as important basis for developing positive attitudes is parents that read at home. There should be books throughout the house and the children should see the parents reading. Reading can be with the newspaper, the TV Guide, or magazine, as well as novels, and even letters. Children must see that parents enjoy reading and this attitude of enjoyment through reading will be developed.

The nature of the home environment and its specific contribution to the reading habits of children was investigated by Harlan S. Hansen (1969, 1973). Hansen found that the home literary environment was a significant factor in the reading attitude of the child. The factor which stood out was parental involvement in the child's reading activities. Behaviors, such as helping the child with homework, helping the child to select books, encouraging the child to read, discussing what was read with the child, and reading to the child, were highly related to the

development of positive attitudes. Hansen notes that parents as model readers had a relatively low ranking. He states that this supports the notion that "it is what parents do in the environment, not who they are in terms of generalized personal or status characteristics, which determines the outcomes of children." (1973, p. 98).

It does not appear that having a high socioeconomic home or the mere possession of literary materials by parents and children is enough to assure the establishment of positive attitudes toward reading in children. The key factor appears to be the interaction between parents, children, and literary materials.

While it is generally conceded that parents exert a major influence on the reading habits of young children, some evidence exists that this influence diminishes as children grow older. A study by Lamme (1976) suggests that for upper elementary children, peers become an increasingly important factor in reading habits and attitudes. In a study of the reading habits of ninth grade students and their parents, O'Rourke (1979) concluded that "the relationship between parent and child reading habits is not a strong one, especially during the late junior high years." (p. 340). The reason for this apparent change is not clear. It may involve many factors, including the increased importance of peer acceptance, a failure to emphasize recreational reading in home and school, the impact of viewing television, as well as other social and environmental factors.

Summary

Language has initiated long before children come to school for the first time. Parents are usually the first and most long-term teachers of their children. Through their attitudes, emotions, values and physical attention come children with developed affective domains who are more likely to do well in learning to read. Parents talk with their children, listen to them, introduce them to the world, broaden their horizons, point out signs and labels to them, help them to perceive relationships, and read to them. These are the foundations of the affective domain and of a school reading program. Through the parents initial work, followed by the teachers training and continued with the parents, the children begin to see that reading is a way of life. Parents need to help develop the affective domain, which in turn will aid the encoding and decoding processes taught in the school reading program. Parents establish the base line toward a lifetime of reading habits.

It seems apparent that while parents do play an important role in the development of reading habits and attitudes, especially in the early years, schools cannot ignore this aspect of reading development. Teachers need to extend the efforts of the home and attempt to provide a supportive environment in the school for those children who lack parental involvement in their homes.

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"Clothes of A King's Son"

by

Vanita Gibbs
Indiana State University

"Son," said my mother
When I was knee high,
"You've need of clothes to cover you,
And not a rag have I."

A scene of poverty develops in Edna St. Vincent Millay's "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver," as the son recalls,

"A rock-rock-rocking
To a mother-goose rhyme!"

In the cold of the night, he sees his mother "weave-weave-weaving" beautiful clothes on the harp; and when he awakes, he realizes that she has woven

"Clothes of a king's son,
Just my size."

What was it that made a difference as he recalled his childhood? Certainly not material things, but in part, at least were the language experiences and the happy environment in which they occurred which set the pace for his life. The emphasis on experience with oral language is a positive trend in the teaching of reading today.

There was a time when children were treated as little adults. They were expected to conform to adult standards. "Sit still. Be quiet." But today, although we accept the equality of children, we never expect any two of them to be alike. The range of abilities is several years in an average kindergarten with that range widening as children progress through school. A college student illustrated this dilemma through a picture of children on a stage, each standing in a spot light. The caption read, "Each child in his own light." There are ways to accomplish this worthy goal.

The first is through an *Emotional Environment*. Children operate on feeling, not reason, and if language is to be emphasized, as emotional environment must be set appropriate to the way children are. Every day Debbie came into my primary classroom asking the same question, "What can I do for you?" I'd suggest she feed the fish or water the plants until I realized one day that her question was really, "What can I do for you *so that you will know I am here?" "Look," she was saying, "I am here. Notice me."* A "feeling" relationship between us needed to be a secure one for her as it does for all children.

Security can be achieved through using the children's language in the classroom or through a common language experience with nursery rhymes or poetry. Failure in reading can strip security from children, and a rich oral language base is an aid to promoting reading success. Taking pictures with a camera provides an experience for talking about something only they have seen. For a birthday treat, a child selects a book or a poem to be read by the teacher. It's the language *impression* which counts; and an emotional environment, sensitive to that need, is basic to success.

Children's needs are not always the ones we have in mind. We know that some children can learn to read at a very young age, but *Expertise* reminds us that it is often done without understanding. Exploring and discovering things which will be read about later in books may be the wise decision of a teacher-expert. Task-oriented children reveal through their language that they are trying to make sense with limited experience. Experiences need language and language in the classroom needs experience. A workbook approach will not fulfill that goal nor will a standard of perfection. We show children how to write a K, insist on one form, and correct it if it isn't that form when children should be having many experiences with K--large, small, a variety of shapes and colors, singing it! I observed a six-year-old writing and singing K's to the tune of "Frere Jacques." Involved in the action, he was learning the K-ness of K. With older students a picture can be studied from which four or five facts are given orally. Conclusions drawn from these facts are a basis for discussion. Experiences at all levels must be richer and fuller if they are to serve children's language needs well.

Then what should we *Expect?* Children's meanings for words are different from ours as adults. Many words they don't know at all. Shall they listen only? Shall we expect them all to accomplish the same tasks in the same time? "A man's reach must exceed his grasp.," said Browning, but it is what we are asking children to reach for that is important. Searching for words that help us hear or see something, three children discussing and completing a worksheet which they all sign, singing a song and then reading the words with the rhythm and pitch of the music are ways of using oral language to expect better results in other language-related skills.

The last suggestion is to add something *Extra.* In a laboratory school where I once taught primary children, there were usually several university students observing or participating. One afternoon, however, we were without any of them; and as the children gathered around to hear a story at the end of the day, one little girl sat by me and said, "I like it, Mrs. Gibbs, when there's just you and me and the kids." The importance of the you-and-me relationship for each child demands something extra of us in order to bridge the gap to logical thinking and learning. Teachers must provide children with many opportunities to see, to hear, to feel. "The work will wait while you show a child a rainbow, but the rainbow won't wait."

Competencies are essential but there should be some choice in arriving at those skills. Children need time to get ready, time to share, and time to be alone. Not all children come to school with a rich background of someone reading and talking with them although most children come bombarded

with other modes of language from the television screen and the shopping center. What a challenge! The school environment must help them live in their world, not as the little boy said, "I'll say this for my dad. He tells it like it used to be."

From teachers, children need consistency and stability. Emily Dickinson said it best.

> I had no time to hate, because
> the grave would hinder me,
> And life was not so ample I
> Could finish enmity.
>
> Nor had I time to love; but since
> Some industry must be,
> The little toil of love, I thought,
> Was large enough for me.

When children feel secure in an atmosphere of acceptance, their language can grow. It is not our goal to ignore what they are like, nor fit them to a prescribed mold, nor isolate them so that oral language is minimal, nor selfishly think of our own feelings but rather of theirs through establishing an *Emotional Environment*, using our *Expertise*, setting attainable *Expectancy* levels, and then providing something *Extra*. Our goals are far-reaching ones as Sandburg said,

> I love you for what you are
> knowing so well what you are.
> And I love you more yet, child,
> deeper yet than ever, child,
> for what you are going to be.

The children we teach are learning from us. Will they someday question what school was all about? Or will they recall with confidence,

> "Clothes of king's son,
> Just my size."

In The Beginning Is The Word: Comprehension Follows

by

Dr. Ruth E. Holland
Indiana University

Words are the root of human experience. They are, therefore, crucial to the process of comprehension. Our thought processes utilize verbal symbols to which we link and associate the vast areas of our experiences. The ability to comprehend is closely linked to the ability to translate words into ideas. A good repertory of precise word meanings will assist the learner in comprehending written material in various situations. Consequently, experience is the focal point of comprehension, especially as it is assessed in today's educational sphere.

Although the vicissitudes of living help to solidify and recall words which are associated with precise experiences, there are other ways which can be utilized for vocabulary acquisition. This is accomplished, of course, through the reading process. The reader generally arrives at word meaning by being cognizant of surrounding words. Perceiving words in context enhances word knowledge. Their importance is derived from the meanings attached to them. Words express ideas and are symbols which represent the various objects, actions and feelings. For the reader, words are the building blocks of learning. They enable the learner to relate to the ideas expressed by other writers in different places and at different points on the time line.

The concept of word level comprehension is basic. This is the simplest form of comprehension. The simple associations are the synonyms, antonyms and classification of words, e.g., furniture represents chair, table, desk and so on.

The more complex associations are those which have connotative or denotative meanings and those which are analogous in nature. The most illusive aspects of comprehension are concerned with multiple meanings, and ambiguous word forms, which are homographic or homophonic in structure.

Reading is the process of bringing meaning to the printed page as well as gaining meaning from it. In depth reading, then, involves meaning which is represented by arbitrary symbols on the printed page; thus, the ability to comprehend print is closely associated with the decoding, encoding and recoding processes. Although the novice learner quickly observes that mere word recognition is not "reading" in the broadest sense, it certainly is an integral part of the process during the early stages of learning to read.

The more one reads, the more satisfying the vicarious experiences. In the beginning, children who respond to reading as a pleasurable experience are becoming familiar with an indispensable tool for life-long learning. Wide reading perpetuates and revitalizes vocabulary acquisition. The process is like a spiral which is constantly climbing upward at all points. True interest expands and deepens; thus it leads the reader to new and higher level of

experience and appreciation. The reader utilizes the comprehension process to accumulate and integrate the known to the new and unknown.

In order to comprehend adequately, the critical reader inadvertently begins the reading process by mentally separating the ideas presented. That is, an attempt is made to identify the significant points and to separate them from the least important ideas. A good reader working for thorough understanding makes a continuous attempt to find the author's main ideas in a selection; then links and relates the minor ideas accordingly. To the experienced reader, comprehending the written material is like reading a road map. A planned itinerary is a much more efficient way to select the best course from the maze of written symbols.

Besides word recall, another inevitability of the academic experience is the necessity to recall information which has been read. Comprehension of the written material in a textbook is as important to the reader as are the notes and music to the pianist. Knowledge of the written material represents mastery and achievement. This observation reemphasizes the dual nature of comprehension. The first step in comprehending material is concerned with knowning the content; the second, demonstrating the knowledge.

The astute learner, by definition, knows how to learn. In other words, the learner knows how to comprehend the material. There are certain conditions which are necessary for complete understanding of a selection. Irrespective of the material format, the awareness and discovery of relationships of words, thoughts, and phrases depends upon a well established web of associations of which the reader must be aware. Whether the material is simple or complex in structure, each sentence must be recognized; then the relationships among the parts can be discovered. After this is accomplished, the parts and the relationships coalesce and merge to yield the concept or encompassing ideas. All of the linking parts mesh together and synthesize into a unit. This synergistic process of merging the events into a mind set should answer the familiar inquiry, "What does the sentence mean?"

Comprehension will be high, and retention adequate, if the reader utilizes the techniques of questioning the material which is being read. The effective reader develops a sensitized approach to the printed page. This sensitizing phenomenon is analogous to scanning a crowd of people for a familiar face. If one looks for a specific person, this individual will stand out from the others. Similarly, when the reader reacts to the "crowd" of printed words, ideas will be undifferentiated unless the reader utilizes a technique which assists the process of anticipating relevant ideas in the selection.

By now, the subtilities of comprehension are apparent. Gaps in the background of the reader may cause the learner to disregard certain aspects of the comprehension and interpretation process which are important to learning. Just as the anthropologist analyzes and makes inferences from the most minute artifact, so must the reader be apprised of details in order to critically evaluate what has been read. Early in the process of reading a selection, the reader reacts to the modd and tone of the selection. Emotional reactions and motives are recognized. From the material presented, the astute reader is able to draw inferences from the passage and interpret figurative expressions within the

selection. The good reader considers the new ideas presented on the printed page in the light of previously acquired knowledge and experience.

The entire concept of the nature of comprehension is complex and intricately interwoven. As a process, comprehension can be most illusive because it involves intuitive properties. When comprehension is considered as a product, it can be analyzed in more objective ways. Typically, the process involves evaluating and assessing questions and responses by myriad testing devices. However, there are other important processes for consideration. Among these are the abilities to summarize and organize major ideas or problems, restating the sequence of ideas and events, and critically evaluating the major ideas of the selection.

Effective reading is an outgrowth of a well designed structure much like the creation of a masterful gourmet chef. The ingredients for reading consists of the senses, those processes, like vision and hearing, which provide the reader with a foundation. The structure of the culinary masterpiece helps the observer to organize and restructure the incoming sensations. The better the cuisine arrangement, the easier it is to perceive and appreciate the basic ingredients. The extrinsic appearance allows the learner to assimilate and utilize the conceptual processes which involves thinking, relating, selecting and formulating ideas. The succulent creation is then appreciated by the novice as well as the connoisseur. The analogy is obvious. A well designed foundation for analyzing the printed page will facilitate comprehension at every level of learning.

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Effect of Advance Organizers and Elaboration on Increasing Comprehension of Educationally Disadvantaged Students

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The research in the area of reading which concerns itself with the teaching of comprehension is very diverse in its approach to the comprehension question. Some studies take on just a segment of the larger domain, while others try to tackle the whole problem head on. The greatest deficiency in the range of studies as a whole would appear to be that they are, for the most part, so very limited in their scope.

One area of teaching reading comprehension that has drawn researchers in the recent past is that of the advance organizer. While much of the research on advance organizers purports to follow the lead of David P. Ausubel, the studies are diverse in their intent, as well as in their conclusions. Ausubel (1969) began from the standpoint that there is an organized hierarchy in cognitive structure. He has said that highly inclusive concepts always subsume or incorporate less inclusive sub-concepts and informational data. He has further assumed that subsumption learning, to be meaningful, must involve an adequate understanding of the concepts involved. Ausubel hypothesized that the presentation of an advance organizer might facilitate learning for those experiencing difficulty comprehending written material. His advance organizer, or prefatory passage, would provide the learner with background material presented at a "higher level of generality, abstraction, and inclusiveness" than the task passage itself. His conception of an advance organizer was not one wherein the learner would be provided with key words and main topics that he would then read in the passage, but one whereby the student would receive superordinate concepts that would prepare him to take in or subsume the lesser concepts and information which he would read.

Ausubel perceived two primary uses for his advance organizer. When the learner is confronted by totally unfamiliar material, the organizer becomes itself cognitive structure. It provides the basic scaffolding on which the learner might potentially build with the data found in the task passage. The more unfamiliar the passage to be learned the most inclusive must be the concepts provided in the organizer. In another aspect, the organizer is useful when the learner is confronted with material that is generally unfamiliar but, nevertheless, relatable to previously learned concepts. The organizer then provides maximal anchorage and increases the discriminability of the content of the passage from similar, yet often conflicting, ideas already in one's cognitive structure.

In his studies, Ausubel found that the subjects benefitting most significantly from the use of the advance organizer were those whose ability and/or knowledge of a particular concept were less than the norm. Evidently, if a person's cognitive structure is already well-organized and stable, he has less need for manipulation by outside factors that could affect the cognitive structure.

Subsequent researchers have investigated the use of advance organizers with different variables and differing ends in view. Smith and Hesse (1969) found that poor readers made significantly better use of the organizer than did good readers. They hypothesized that the cognitive organizer interfered with the already-established self-organizing techniques of the better readers.

Andrews (n.d.) compared the use of the cognitive organizer with that of the directed reading question in trying to ascertain which contributed more toward students' comprehension of prose material. His findings indicated that the organizer was more effective than the directed reading question as a means of improving reading comprehension.

Richards and McCormick (1977) compared the use of the advance organizer with that of the interspersed organizer and achieved insignificant results. They concluded that the insignificance was due in pa t to the passages used, which already had a well-organized structure. Pastore and Dale (1977) used third and fifth graders in their investigation of advance and interspersed organizers. Their findings indicated that the third graders performed better when using both the advance and the interspersed organizers, where as the fifth graders showed better performance when using the advance organizer alone. The investigators hypothesized that the fifth graders had already acquired enough cognitive structure of their own so as to make the interspersed organizer more a hindrance than a help.

Novak, Ring, and Tamir (1971) drew a similar conclusion when they investigated the use of advance organizers in the area of science. They found that high-ability students evidently provide their own subsumers and organization for learning, while low-ability students need some type of external organizing factor.

Many other studies have been conducted with several types of organizers-prefatory statements, thematic organizers - but their conclusions are mixed. Part of the difficulty lies with the studies themselves; their content, including subjects and materials used, the procedures followed, is so diverse that few justifiable conclusions for general usage can be drawn. Another difficulty lies with the background Ausubel has given for the advance organizer. While his description of the organizer is stimulating, examples of organizers used by him would have given later researchers more solid ground from which to provide more comparable data.

A second area of study that seemed feasible for use was one pursued by Eunice Ryan and Paul Torrance (1967) with seventh grade remedial readers. They hypothesized that exercises in elaboration in connection with reading might be especially helpful in facilitating certain aspects of creative growth. The exercises in elaboration involved digging deeper into the learning task; that is, getting under the surface, going beyond superficiality, and searching for motivations and other causal relationships; looking twice, or looking at the task with different purposes or from a different standpoint in time, listening for smells; that is, bringing the imagination and all the senses into play; and attempting to answer difficult questions and solve difficult problems. The post-test results from their study indicated that a growth in the ability to elaborate seemed to be accompanied by growth in reading skills, especially comprehension and reference skills.

Even though Ausubel had used college undergraduates in his studies, his

reference to the usefulness of the advance organizer with lower ability or conceptually-deprived students led the authors to belive that the advance organizer might have utility with middle grade students. Ausubel's organizers were written pieces to be read prior to the reading of the task passages. Because the reading itself can sometimes hinder middle grade students' learning, the subsuming concepts for their task passage were put on tape for them to listen to prior to their reading the passage. The organizer was generally written at a higher level of readability than was the task passage, since the former was delivered aurally, not visually.

Figure 1
Example of an Advance Organizer

"The Lady Who Loved Stickball"
by Mel Cebulash

Rules seem to be as much a part of our lives as eating and sleeping. There is hardly anything we do that is not governed or controlled by rules.

Some things operate with a definite set of rules. Many of the games and sporting contests we know are tightly controlled by rules. Special persons called referees are employed or used to make sure that the rules are closely followed. It is their job to enforce the rules, to see that the rules are not broken. When a rule is broken, it is the referee's duty to assess or give a penalty to the person breaking the rule.

Sometimes, groups or persons operate with their own set of rules, not caring how their rules might affect anyone else. When these rule-makers differ or disagree with another set of rule-makers, conflicts or disputes are likely to arise. This type of disagreement is liable to be present when a union and a company are negotiating or discussing their employees' contracts for the coming year. It can also come up when family members do not agree. When the parties or persons involved are not able to resolve their differences or settle their disputes, a third person or an intermediary is often asked to step in, to become involved. This third party could be a professional negotiator, a counselor, a judge, or, even a jury.

Yet other rules are unspoken and generally unenforced. These are the rules of conduct and decency which most people accept and practice without much conscious effort, without having to be forced to do - the kind word spoken to a person who is terribly saddened, a helpful assist to a young child or an elderly person, or resisting the urge to be horrified or upset by someone else's handicap.

Each of us has his own set of rules. Those rules don't have to be inflexible; they can be changed as circumstances or events change. We must, however, remember that we live in a world that operates with rules. Without them, havoc and disorder occur. With rules, we can make some sense of our actions.

The elaboration questions were written for the students to answer individually before the questions were discussed within the total group.

Figure 2
Example of Elaboration Questions

"The Lady Who Loved Stickball"
by Mel Cebulash

ELABORATION:

1. Would the first part of the story have been different if Mrs. Davis had not been blind?

2. Could Mrs. Davis have served the same purpose or done the same things for the boys if she had had a handicap other than blindness? How so?

3. What things are difficult or different for a person who is blind? for someone with another kind of handicap?

4. What can we do to be helpful to persons with handicaps?

Sample and Tests Used

This study involved 77 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students enrolled in a Title I reading program. For purposes of the study, the students were assigned to one of four groups.

These students were pretested in mid-January, 1978, using the Nonverbal Battery of the Cognitive Abilities Test, Multi-Level Edition, Form 1 (1971), as well as the comprehension tests from the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Tests, Brown Level, Form A (1976). The Stanford's comprehension tests can be divided to give both a literal comprehension score and an inferential comprehension score. The comprehension tests of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Brown Level, Form A, were also used as the post-tests and were administered the second week of June, 1978.

Results and Design

To study the effect of advance organizers, elaboration, and the interaction of these factors, a 2 x 2 factorial design was adopted (see Figure 3). Group 1 (n=21) receive both advance organizers and elaboration, Group 2 (n=17) receive the advance organizers but no elaboration, Group 3 (n=19) received elaboration but no advance organizers, and Group 4 (n=21) received neither advance organizers nor elaboration.

Figure 3

Two Way Factorial Design - Advance Organizers and Elaboration

		Elaboration: yes	Elaboration: no
Advance Organizers	yes	1	2
	no	3	4

The first research question asked was: "Taking both outcomes, post-literal and post-inferential comprehension, into consideration at the same time, a) is there an interaction between advance organizers and elaboration, b) is there a difference between those receiving advance organizers and those not receiving this aid, and c) is there a difference between those receiving elaboration and those not receiving this aid?"

The questions were answered using a multivariate analysis of covariance as the statistical analytic strategy, with IQ, pre-literal and pre-inferential comprehension as the covariates.

Pillai's trace criterion was used to test for multivariate significance in all three questions. As can be seen in Table 1, significant differences did not emerge in the multivariate test for the interaction between advance organizers and elaboration.

TABLE I

MANCOVA Test for the Overall Effects

Advance Organizers	F(2,69)=0.01	Prob. F>. 9903
Elaboration	F(2,69)=2.16	Prob. F>. 1226
Advance Organizers x Elaboration	F(2,69)=1.98	Prob. F>. 1459

Also, there were no statistically significant differences in comprehension between subjects taught by using advance organizers and those taught with elaboration.

The other research question asked was: "Taking each outcome into consideration separately (literal and inferential), are the groups significantly different?" A univariate analysis of covariance was used to answer this question, and, as can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, neither main effect was significant for either literal or inferential comprehension, although

TABLE 2

Post-Literal Comprehension

Advance Organizers	F(1,70)=0.002	Prob. F > .8904
Elaboration	F(1,70)=4.38	Prob. F > .0401
Advance Organizers x Elaboration	F(1,70)=0.05	Prob. F > .8282

TABLE 3

Post-Inferential Comprehension

Advance Organizers	F(1,70)=0.01	Prob. F > .9374
Elaboration	F(1,70)=2.46	Prob. F > .1211
Advance Organizers x Elaboration	F(1,70)=2.43	Prob. F > .1239

elaboration for literal comprehension approached significance. Since the level of significance for the multivariate analysis was the .05 level, the level was reduced to .025 for the univariate analysis to guard against an inflated alpha level. The interaction of advanced organizers and elaboration on literal and

inferential comprehension was not significant.

Discussion

Based on the statistical analysis, the groups are not significantly different in any of the analyses.

Advance organizers, as they were used in this study, were not as well attended by the students as they might have been under a different manner of presentation. Perhaps, presenting the organizer simultaneously in both aural and visual modes, that is, letting the student see the written organizer as he hears it read to him, might possibly allow for a more meaningful reception on the part of the student. From the standpoint of teacher preparation, the advance organizer is very time-consuming, as one attempts to translate a concept into a higher level of generality, abstraction, and inclusiveness, without going completely beyond the student's understanding of the vocabulary involved.

Based on classroom observation, we believe that the elaboration technique may offer promise for the student deficient in comprehension skills. Training in elaboration seems to expand the bounds of the reader and allow him to get more out of his reading. Elaboration allows for exposure to vivid imagery and expanded vocabulary as well as, for some students, vicarious exposure to situations never before imagined and certainly not possible under their present circumstances. The limits of elaboration seem boundless, especially as that technique opens paths for the correlated teaching of writing and speech.

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Measuring Reading Performance Informally

by

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In the very early days of motion pictures when Western thrillers were shown in the ranch towns of the West, real cowboys would ride in from miles around to see the Saturday night show. As they sat in dingy theaters, they would watch the villain ride across the screen shooting up the town, robbing banks, and holding lovely heroines at his mercy. It is said that the cowboys sometimes became so excited and enraged at the villain that they would pull out their own guns and shoot at the screen.

The absurdity of this effort is readily apparent. If they had wanted to get the villain they would have done better to turn in their seats and shoot out the projector. The screen was only the reflection of the problem. The problem was somewhere else, difficult to get to, but no less real.

Reading professionals may be spending their time shooting at screens. At a reading conference in Chicago, Johns (1976) asked 24 professionals their views regarding 24 given statements about the informal reading inventory. It is interesting that those reading people were most concerned that the IRI overestimated the proper reading level for instruction (18 of 24 respondents). However, statements showing concern about the validity, reliability, or the criteria for determining levels were ranked 15th, 16th, and 17th respectively. There was apparently little awareness on the part of these professionals that the problem for which they were most concerned was a mere reflection of the things they rated so relatively insignificant.

The informal reading inventory (IRI) is a teacher constructed test which can be used to measure oral reading performance. It is a record of a reader's performance in a succession of short (125-175 words) reading passages of increasing difficulty. Steuver (1967) has shown that it takes a passage length in this range for the quantitative errors to stabilize so a subsequent qualitative analysis may be done, if desired.

The record is obtained by having a student read each passage while the teacher monitors the oral reading performance and asks previously prepared, varied questions about each passage. The teacher keeps a record of the oral reading errors and responses to the questions. The reading passages should be taken from or should be equivalent in difficulty to books used for instruction in the classroom.

The purpose of an IRI is to allow a teacher to make a semi-controlled observation of the many characteristics of a child's reading performance. The results of an IRI should predict the book level, readability level, or level of difficulty a subject can process at three levels of performance according to specified criteria. It is certain characteristic of observed reading behavior and the specified criteria which are the focus of this paper.

Characteristics of Oral Reading Behavior

Primary and secondary analysis of oral reading data reveals that children's actual performances produce a reducing variable error pattern across levels. Easier material permits greater production of and latitude for error than in increasingly more difficult material. There is an observed pattern of error ratios from high error ratios to low ones, from production of many errors to a reduced number of miscues. (Powell, 1970; Powell and Dunkeld, 1971; Dunkeld, 1970; Page, 1975; Spache, 1963; Durell, 1955; Gilmore, 1968; Gray, 1963; Isakson and Miller, 1978.)

This reducing error pattern produces a differential effect of observed accuracy (error values) across levels. Performance in first grade material is not the same as a performance in sixth grade material. Error values of satisfactory performance is not the same for each level. There is an average of about a two-and-one-half percent difference between levels as the material increases in difficulty. This pattern creates an inverse relationship between levels of difficulty and latitude for error in acceptable ranges of performance. (Powell, 1970; Dunkeld, 1970).

The key to this movement across different reading levels is the difficulty or the readability of the material. The difficulty or maturity of the written language, not the grade placement or age of the reader, is the primary factor effecting error production. (Powell, 1971; Watkins, 1953.) Kinsbourne (1976) has observed that when a youngster experiences difficulty in reading, the nature of his errors represents the level of difficulty of the material (expressed in readability grade level estimates) at which he is functioning rather than his chronological grade placement, chronological age or any relevant pathology. (p. 154)

The easier the material the more error that can be tolerated and still maintain satisfactory understanding. As the materials increases in difficulty, the less error latitude is permitted for understanding. Students in materials at pre-primer to second grade difficulty can cope with more error and maintain understanding than in material from the third to fifth range, which in turn can tolerate more error than in material of sixth grade difficulty or higher. Readers tolerate error in an inverse relationship to the difficulty of the material. (Powell, 1971; Page, 1975; Dunkeld, 1970.)

Support for these findings also comes from growth in cognitive development studies. Wohlwill (1962) indicates that the movement from perception to reasoning permits a decrease in dependence of behavior on information from the immediate stimulus field. This movement is due to a decrease in redundancy, an increase in selectivity, and an increase in the temporal and spatial contiguity tolerated. (pp. 98-102)

When a student reaches approximately the fifth grade instructional reading level, it is doubtful if the criterion of word recognition accuracy is a valid indicator for the differentiation. This finding was apparent in Dunkeld's data (1970), and Matejcek (1976) found a plateau effect at an earlier grade level in the phonetically consistent Czech language. Once a reader masters decoding skills to a level of automaticity, then that factor begins to lose its differential function. As a reader increases in reading power, the number of miscues gradually loses its strength as an indicator for differential value.

However, the number of recognition errors represent a relationship to the sample size of the subject's recognition vocabulary. If the number of words based on the word frequency studfes of Carroll, Davies, and Richman (1971) is interacted with the word recognition criteria-suggested by Powell (1971), then it is possible to calculate the cumulative word corpus for each grade level data available. If the calculation is made at the point where frustration level would begin, then the number of words that should form the base sight vocabulary for a given grade level can be determined. For example, at third grade level, a decrease in the error ratio results in an increase in sight vocabulary by about 275 words. Therefore, one error does make a difference as each additional error would reflect a decrease of sight vocabulary of approximately 250 to 300 words.

The types of miscues that are counted as errors in computing the word recognition ratio makes a difference, too. The evidence from Dunkeld's study (1970) would indicate that only insertions, omissions, mispronunciations, substitutions, unknown words, and transpositions should be counted as scorable errors. The inclusion of repetitions, self-corrections, hesitations, or any other type of symptomatic behavior does not enhance the accuracy of word recognition score. However, as Clay (1972) has so clearly indicated, the number of self-corrections to the total number of errors are of diagnostic value in revealing the efficiency of processing clues. This diagnostic insight is additional to the word recognition score and calculated separately from it.

In evaluating oral reading behavior via an informal reading inventory, a cautionary note needs to be applied to the comprehension score on the first passage read. It is likely to be an unreliable score, as observation (Dunkeld, 1970) has recorded that this is true in two-thirds of the protocols studies. Furthermore, it has been observed that symptoms (repetitions, hesitation, finger point, word-by-word reading, holding book too close, etc.) are of diagnostic value only during the first two years of the learning to read process. (Dunkeld, 1970.) After that point, the temporarily induced behavior fades into habituation and loses its diagnostic significance.

Comprehension scores on an informal reading inventory have a differential criteria in proportion to the reducing effect of word recognition. Studies have shown a strong positive relationship between word recognition and comprehension. Ehri (1978) finds children must "read words not only accurately but also rapidly and with attention." (p. 18) Pace and Golinkoff (1976) state that although some reading theorists argue that accurate word recognition is not even necessary for the comprehension of the text, they conclude from their data that if a word cannot be decoded readily, its meaning may not be retrieved and access of meaning will not occur. (p. 765) "Comprehension may be impaired if too many words cannot be decoded readily." (p. 766) Reading comprehension deficiency is at least partially attributed to a failure to fully identify a sufficient number of words during the course of reading.

The data given in studies by Markman (1977) and Pace (1978) clearly show a differential level of comprehension accuracy across grade levels. Children in the lower grades have a less effective performance, due to passive processing, than those older youngsters who have to monitor and transform linguistic input.

Assuming a baseline level can be established for comprehension sufficiency-insufficiency, then the relationship between a differential word recognition score should produce differential values for comprehension performance.

Repeated performance on the same material produces less error on successive readings. (Powell, 1973; Busboom, 1973; Page, 1975; Kasdon, 1970; Lowell, 1970.) There is a reduction factor which the second and third reading of the material produces on the error effect. The second reading reduces error in word identification and comprehension about 25 to 33 percent; a third reading and other related practice further reduces error another 15 to 17 percent. Coupled with the error reducing effect of introducing vocabulary effectively prior to the first reading, it is apparent that effective teaching can transform a given piece of material from near frustration level to independent level. Therefore, a different set of evaluative criteria is necessary for diagnosis (oral at sight), a developmental lesson (silent before oral), and the completion process of teaching a given selection.

The Criterion Issue

The above characteristics of reading behavior should be reflected in any given set of criteria for evaluating reading performance. It is obvious that a uniform criterion cannot be applicable to the conditions of the word recognition and comprehension process. A differential set of values is indicated for both word recognition and comprehension scores.

The Betts (1946) criteria for the IRI are by far the most widely used values for evaluating reading behavior. While the Betts criteria are applicable for a given grade range (fourth) and under developmental conditions at that level, it obviously cannot evaluate reading performance for the large number of readers outside that range or under different conditions. A differential set of criteria is essential for different levels and different conditions of reading. One set no longer will apply. Yet when one reads the descriptive accounts on the IRI in recent scholarly journals or newly released textbooks in reading, a traditional one non-differential set of criteria continues to be promulgated. As the frontier editor says in the film The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, "When there's a conflict between the facts and the legend, we print the legend."

To effectively evaluate reading behavior informally, three pieces of information must be known and used for a reliable and valid measure: (1) what to include in effecting the criteria; (2) what not to include in the primary or first-order evaluation; and (3) what baseline criteria from which to form one's decision about the quality of reading.

In evaluating the quality of oral reading, the evidence (Dunkeld, 1970) suggests that only errors of insertions, omissions, mispronunciations, substitutions, unknown words, and transpositions be included in determining the word recognition error ratio. Errors of repetition, punctuation omissions, self-corrections, proper names and places, dialect, and speech defects should be treated as symptomatic type errors and not used to effect the word recognition score. They may be recorded for secondary analysis if need be, but they should be included in determining the initial quality of oral reading. No assumption should be made that although the six scorable type errors are given equal weight,

they are in terms of quality. Obviously, they are not of equal importance, but as yet no satisfactory method has been discovered to adequately weigh them properly.

Symptomatic type errors should not be used to effect the determination of word recognition accuracy. Fluency errors and observable behavior errors while distracting and probably desirable behaviors to apply extinction to, are not primary determiners in assisting in predicting the correct level of placement into instructional material.

The third essential item of information for measuring reading informally is to have some framework or guidelines by which to decide when a reading performance is moving toward the unsatisfactory end of the reading continuum. Criteria can be applied along three dimensions: comprehension, word recognition, and symptomatic behaviors. These dimensions are important, in that order, for determining the final decision as to the quality of reading. A discussion of each criterion dimension deserves attention.

The comprehension dimension is the most important of the three in determining final placement. When comprehension drops below the criterion for a given level, then it matters not what happens on the other two dimensions. The reading should end and a final judgement can be rendered. The comprehension questions asked following a reading (oral or silent) should be varied according to type. There should be questions on a literal level, implied types of questions, questions on the vocabulary used in that passage, and questions requiring evaluative skill. In all instances, the questions should be context dependent, i.e., answerable only by the information base supplied in the passage and dependent upon it. If the questions can be answered solely by prior experience or knowledge, then reading comprehension in that selection is not to have been measured.

The criteria for comprehension by clustering reading levels is given in Table 1. There is a differential effect by level and by condition. In materials at the readability levels of grades one and two, a 55 percent criterion is adequate for instructional placement when reading orally at sight (diagnostic function). For difficulty levels three, four, and five, 60 percent is the minimum satisfactory level, and for readability levels six or higher, a 65 percent criterion is essential to maintain quality of performance.

These data are derived by interacting cloze criterion scores from the Bormouth date (1972), the post oral cloze scores of Page (1975), the maximum cloze reconstruction figures (Weaver, 1977), with the word recognition figures given also in Table 1. (Powell, 1973.) While these scores are quite different from the traditional 75 percent criterion (which was derived from early school boards' criterion for examining and licensing teachers, i.e., arbitrarily determined), they are more realistic than the arbitrary percentages set without any particular precedent. A cloze score base has been determined by readers'

TABLE 1

Informal Reading Inventory
Scoring Criteria By Performance Level
and Condition

	Diagnosis		Developmental Teaching		Lesson Evaluation	
	W/R	Comp.	W/R	Comp.	W/R	Comp.
Independent Level						
1 - 2	1/17+	80+	1/17+	80+	1/17+	80+
3 - 5	1/27+	85+	1/27+	85+	1/27+	85+
6+	1/35+	90+	1/35+	90+	1/35+	90+
Instructional Level						
1 - 2	1/8 - 1/16	55-80	1/12 - 1/16	70-80	Converted to	
3 - 5	1/13 - 1/26	60-85	1/20 - 1/26	75-85	Independent	
6+	1/18 - 1/35	65-90	1/26 - 1/36	80-90	Level	
Frustration Level						
1 - 2	1/7 -	55-	1/11 -	70-		
3 - 5	1/12 -	60-	1/19 -	75-		
6+	1/17 -	65-	1/25 -	80-		

actual performance. Extrapolating them into a differential percentage framework provides a more realistic evaluation of comprehension performance.

The word recognition criteria given in Table 1 has previously been published and discussed (Powell, 1970; 1971; 1973; and 1976). While the criteria is given in readability clusters (1-2, 3-5, 6+) for ease of application in practice, it should be remembered that each level of difficulty has its own distinctive criterion figure (See Powell, 1970). The readability clusters are for convenience only of closely related figures. There is a distinct break in the pattern of scores between readability levels two and three and again between levels five and six. These natural breaks in reading growth form the cluster patterns given in Table 1.

When symptoms of difficulty are of value (in grades one and two), one or two symptoms are probably representative of the instructional zone for those children. More symptoms present than that are likely to represent the frustration level of reading while no observable symptoms would represent the independent reading level.

Conclusion

The initial task of measuring reading informally is to place the reader into material of the correct difficulty or readability level. This decision is first based on quantitative data. Then an error analysis (McLeod, 1918; Monroe; 1932; Goodman and Burke, 1972) is performed to make a qualitative analysis. Perfetti, Bell, and Goldman (1976) make the general conclusion "that the differences connected with reading skills are quantitative rather than qualitative." (p. 12) The issue is not one of either-or, but a matter of the purpose served, the need for additional information on reading behavior, and the order by which the data on a given reading performance is processed. Placement precedes analysis; quantitative precedes qualitative, but both are necessary for an effective diagnosis of reading behavior.

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Implications and Application of Psycholinguistic Research Comparing the Oral Reading Strategies of Students Taught by Two Approaches - Phonic Emphasis and Eclectic Basal

by

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Psycholinguistic research which analyzes oral reading errors is based on the premise that all responses to printed words are caused and are not accidental. Goodman (1969) contends that oral reading errors or miscues are generated through the same process as expected text words. By comparing the ways the miscue differs from the expected response the teacher or researcher gets direct insights into how the reading process is functioning in a particular student. These insights reveal reading strengths as well as reading weaknesses. Psycholinguistic analysis can thus be used to identify the oral reading strategies used by individual readers.

Eisenhardt (1974) says that words alone do not carry precise meaning until they are placed in the structural and intonation system of the English language. Written language contains linguistic cues that enable the reader to reconstruct a message successfully. Goodman (1969) identifies three such cueing systems. These systems include grapho-phonemic cues (the relationships between the sounds of the letters and the appearance of the letter), syntactic cues (the grammatical structure of the sentence), and semantic cues (the meaning of the sentence and passage). Miscue analysis endeavors to show which of these cues or what combination of cues a reader relies upon by comparing the oral reading errors with the textual word on all of these linguistic levels.

The analysis of correction strategies is one of the most crucial categories investigated by oral reading researchers (Allen, 1972 and Page, 1974). The analysis of which errors are corrected and the circumstances related to the correction indicate the cueing systems used by a student. Does the student correct an error when it becomes either syntactically or semantically unacceptable or if the grapho-phonemic relationship appears inappropriate? Does a student not correct an error if it is syntactically and semantically acceptable or the grapho-phonemic relationship appears appropriate?

Several reading authorities have suggested that oral reading strategies instead of being developmental in nature, may be related to the specific reading instructional program (Barr, 1975; DeLawter, 1970; Burke, 1973; and Norton, 1976). Chall (1973) proposed an analysis of oral reading errors of children taught by different methods and materials in order to provide a picture of the developmental process of learning to read as it relates to the way pupils are taught and the materials on which they practice. Chall states, "The implications of these kinds of error data for understanding the beginning reading process and for the diagnosis and teaching based on individual's needs are enormous."

If children of the same age and grade level have distinct patterns in the distribution of error types due to differential training there may be aspects of

the reading curriculum or properties of materials that lead a child into making errors, correcting errors, or developing specific comprehension skills. The identification of special oral reading strategies could assist reading instructors in identifying the combination of instructional strategies that develop in the reader the ability to self correct errors and read with a higher degree of comprehension.

Instructional materials used for beginning reading stress quite different linguistic cueing systems. The phonic emphasis materials emphasize grapho-phonemic correspondence by providing intensive attention to the ability to decode. The initial reading vocabulary is controlled according to the regularity of the spelling patterns, words are frequently presented in isolated word lists, and teachers stress the ability to sound out words rather than using the contextual analysis of the passage. This emphasis on decoding may cause the child to ignore the semantic and syntactic cueing systems in written language. In contrast, eclectic programs stress semantic cueing systems from the beginning by stressing sentence, paragraph, and picture meaning. The eclectic programs control vocabulary on the frequency of use criterion, provide a more gradual introduction to phonic analysis, have an early emphasis on silent reading, and provide instruction in a variety of word recognition clues. This instruction may cause the child to rely more heavily on the semantic and syntactic cueing systems rather than graphic or phonic cueing systems.

This author, through a research grant at Texas A&M University (1978), has been investigating the oral reading strategies and comprehension levels that are developed by high, average, and low ability readers who receive first grade instruction using a phonic emphasis reading approach or an eclectic reading approach. The specific oral reading linguistic categories measured through miscue analysis included graphic proximity, phonic proximity, grammatical function, syntactic acceptability in the total sentence, semantic acceptability in the total sentence, meaning change, nonword miscues, and corrected miscues. Correction strategies were evaluated by analyzing corrected miscues according to the semantic acceptability of the sentence before the correction, syntactic acceptability of the sentence prior to correction, the influence of the error on the total meaning of the passage, and the grapho-phonemic relationship of the corrected error and the text word. Finally, the research has investigated the independent and instructional comprehension levels of phonic emphasis and eclectic emphasis readers.

The purpose of this research was to answer the following questions: (1) Do first grade students learning to read from a phonic approach or from an eclectic approach use different strategies during oral reading in sentence contexts? (2) Do first grade students learning to read from a phonic approach or from an eclectic approach develop different levels of comprehension skills?

In addition to answering the above questions the project has attempted to identify linguistic profiles that are examples of highly effective, moderately effective, and ineffective readers and to demonstrate how this knowledge may be used to improve reading instruction for individual students.

Review of Research Findings and Instructional Implications

Research completed by this author supported the hypothesis that the oral reading strategies of students instructed with a phonic approach would be different

from the strategies of students instructed with an eclectic approach. Children's use of linguistic cueing systems were found to be closely related to the instructional approach used. The following conclusions can be made about the errors and comprehension of students who learn to read using a phonic emphasis program:

1. There are significantly higher mean scores for miscue that have a high graphic proximity.

2. There are significantly higher mean scores for miscues that have a high phonic proximity.

3. There are significantly higher mean scores for miscues that are classified as nonwords.

4. There are significantly higher word recognition scores.

The following conclusions can be made about the errors of students who learn to read using an eclectic program:

1. There are significantly higher mean scores for miscues that are syntactically acceptable within the total sentence.

2. There are significantly higher mean scores for miscues that are semantically acceptable within the total sentence.

3. There are significantly higher mean scores for miscues that cause no change of meaning in the passage.

4. There are significantly higher mean scores for miscues that are self-corrected by the student.

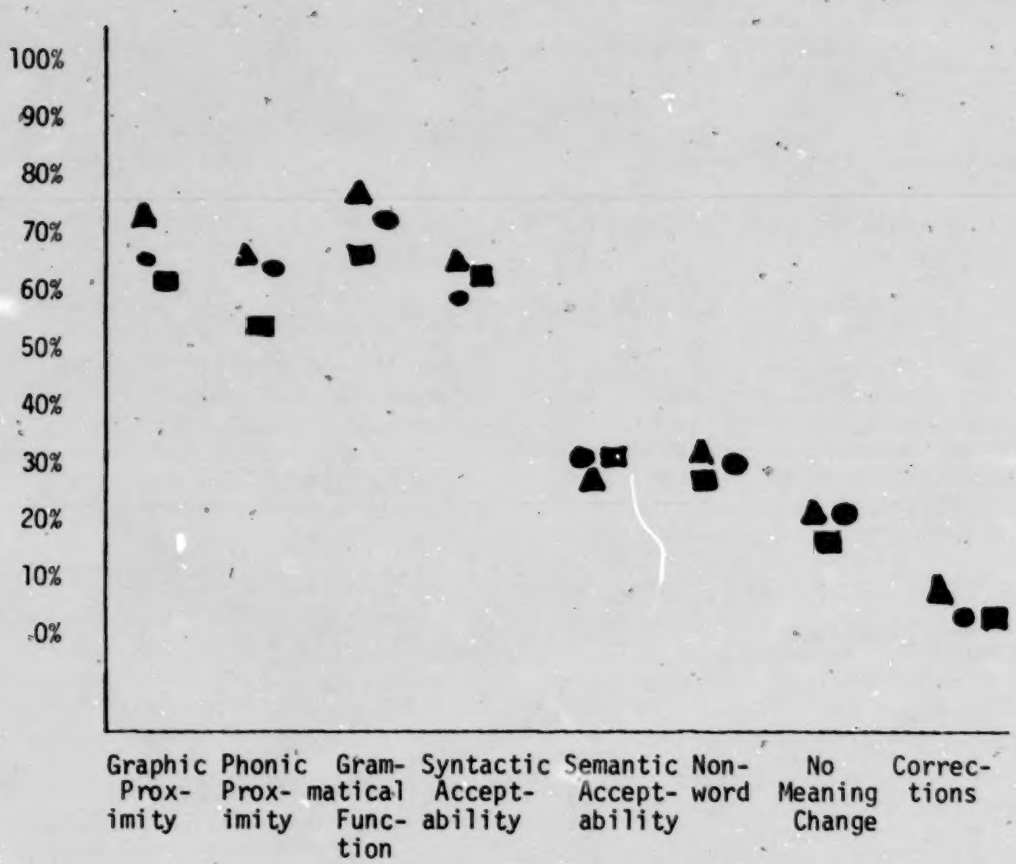
5. There are significantly higher mean scores for self-corrected miscues that are syntactically acceptable only with the beginning portion of the sentence.

6. There are significantly higher mean scores for self-corrected miscues that are semantically acceptable only with the beginning portion of the sentence.

7. There are significantly higher comprehension scores.

Low, average, and high ability students learning to read using a phonic approach demonstrated very similar oral reading profiles. Likewise, the oral reading profiles were similar for students learning to read using an eclectic approach. Figure 1 illustrates the similarities in the percentage of miscues in specific linguistic categories of high, middle, and low ability students who learned to read using a phonic approach. It appears that all ability groups within a phonic emphasis approach develop specific oral reading strategies. The students produced a high proportion of words that have the same graphic proximity and phonic proximity as the text word. The code emphasis of the program does develop a student's reliance on a phonic reading strategy. The students also utilize their knowledge of grammatical constraints. A large portion of their errors had the same grammatical function as the text word.

Figure 1



Similarities Between High, Middle, and Low Ability Phonic Groups

KEY:
▲ = High Phonic First Grade Readers
● = Middle Phonic First Grade Readers
■ = Low Phonic First Grade Readers

These errors also produced sentences that were syntactically acceptable. This syntactic acceptability was higher than semantic acceptability. It would appear that first grade phonic emphasis students do not use semantic cues as frequently as they use graphic, phonic, and grammatical cues. This hypothesis is substantiated by the phonic emphasis students' production of approximately 40 percent nonword miscues. These nonword miscues are usually categorized as having a high graphic proximity, a high phonic proximity, and a similar grammatical function. The phonic emphasis students did not demonstrate the development of consistent correction strategies. This may be due to the stress on graphic and phonic cues. The students' errors were both graphically and phonically similar to the text word; consequently, they may have experienced no urge to correct the error even though the error resulted in both a meaning change and semantically unacceptable sentence.

In contrast to the phonic emphasis profiles, the eclectic groups produced different oral reading strategies. Figure 2 compiles the category percentages for the high, middle, and low ability eclectic students. The eclectic instructional stress on contextual constraints was apparent in the oral reading profiles. Four of the categories are almost identical for all eclectic ability groups. This approach apparently produces students who rely on cues related to grammatical function, syntactic acceptability, and semantic acceptability. This tendence to rely on semantic cues is illustrated by the low production of nonword miscues. A nonword would result in a sentence that was semantically unacceptable.

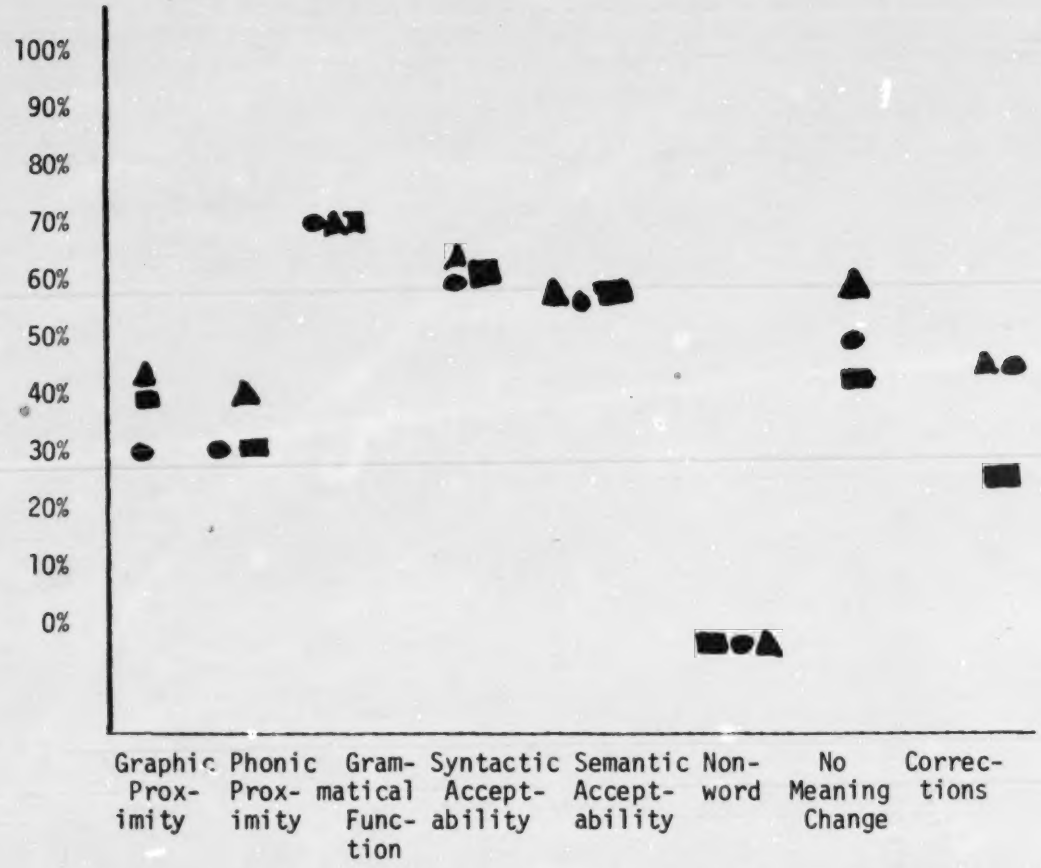
The four remaining categories illustrated in Figure 2 show differences according to ability groups. As an example, the high ability eclectic students used the graphic and phonic cues in words more frequently than the low ability eclectic students. The instructional phonic activities provided by the approach may be sufficient for the high ability student. The lower ability student, however, may need supplementary instruction in structured phonic materials.

Differences are also visible in the production of errors that do not cause a meaning change within the total text. The percentages in this area decrease with the ability of the students. The high ability eclectic students predominately produced errors that did not change the meaning of the total text. The lower ability students were not concentrating as effectively on total meaning. This meaning category was one of the most reliable indicators of the eclectic students' level of reading ability. It is interesting to note that the low ability student appears to be focusing on isolated semantic acceptability of individual sentences rather than on total passage meaning. If this hypothesis is correct, the reading program needs to stress longer passage meaning.

Correction strategies also differ according to the ability of the eclectic readers. Figure 2 shows that both high and average ability eclectic readers correct more errors than low ability eclectic students. When students do not correct their errors, they are apparently not thinking about meaning as they read. These students should be encouraged to ask themselves, "Does what I read make sense in this story? If not, what should I do about it?"

Research results also indicate that phonic emphasis students and eclectic emphasis students produce different comprehension patterns related to the specific

Figure 2



Similarities Between High, Middle, and Low Ability Eclectic Groups

KEY:
▲ = High Eclectic First Grade Readers
● = Middle Eclectic First Grade Readers
■ = Low Eclectic First Grade Readers

instructional approach. The Silvaroli Classroom Inventory was administered to all students because it provides independent and instructional levels for both word recognition and comprehension. The high and average ability groups of the phonic emphasis approach produced significantly higher scores for word recognition, while the high and average ability groups of the eclectic approach produced significantly higher scores for comprehension. The superior word recognition achievement of the phonic emphasis students corresponds with the decoding skills that are emphasized in the instructional materials. In contrast, the early comprehension emphasis of the eclectic approach apparently produced students who demonstrate higher comprehension skills than word recognition skills. The word recognition levels for the phonic emphasis students averaged approximately one grade level higher than the comprehension levels for the same students. The eclectic students demonstrated this pattern in reverse, with comprehension levels about one grade higher than word recognition levels.

The comprehension and word recognition levels are apparently related to the miscue analysis patterns developed by the respective groups. The group that produced high graphic and phonic proximities also produced semantic acceptability, fewer meaning changes, and extensive corrections yielded higher comprehension scores.

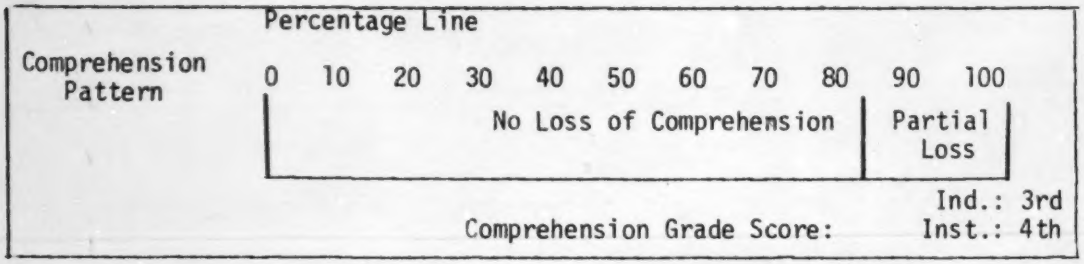
Teacher Application of Miscue Profiles

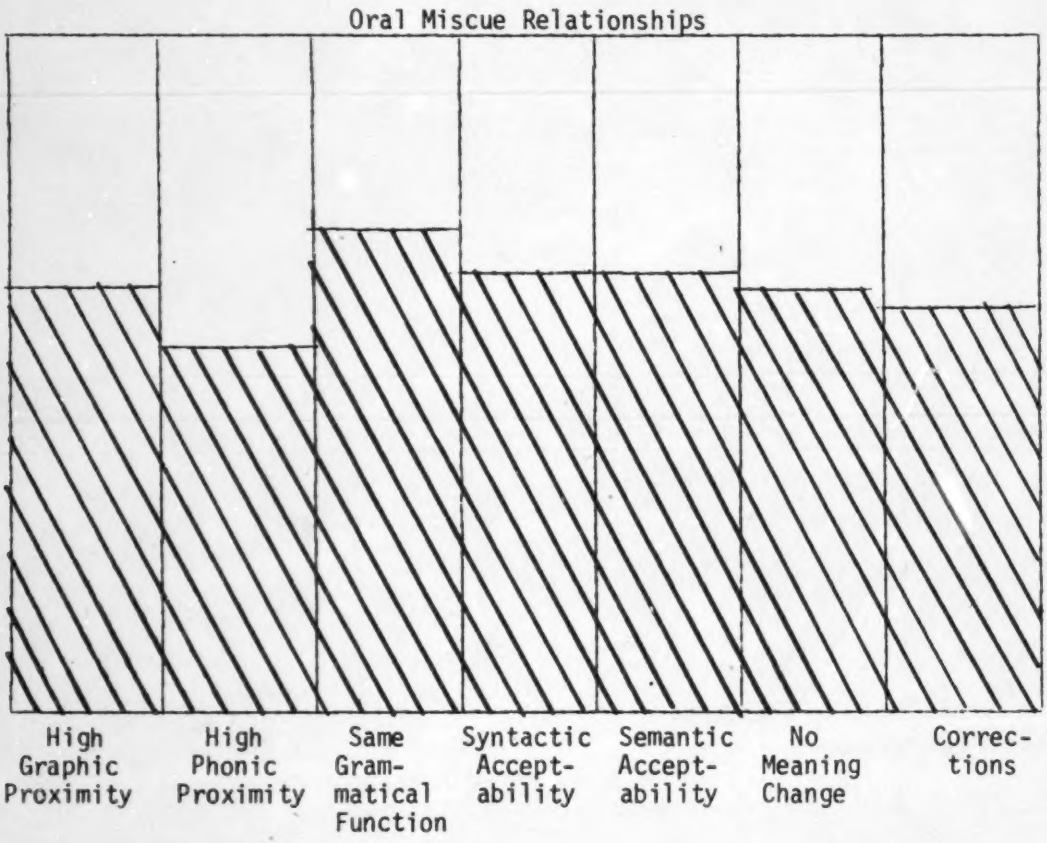
The information obtained from the analysis of errors according to linguistic categories and testing the comprehension and word recognition levels of the students providea a student profile that illustrates the linguistic reading strategies that the child is either effectively or ineffectively using. Comparing profiles of highly effective readers and ineffective readers provides insights into how these students are approaching a reading selection.

Figure 3 shows the average miscue profile developed by the high ability eclectic group of students. These first grade students produced high comprehension grade scores as well as miscue patterns that demonstrate the use of all the linguistic cueing systems. These students balanced the use of the various cueing systems and did not have one category completely overbalance another category. When they made an error that was syntactically unacceptable, semantically unacceptable, and/or caused a meaning change they usually self-corrected the error. These readers have the skills necessary for meaningful independent reading. Their reading program can be individualized by the addition of supplementary materials to broaden interests and stimulate thinking and imagination.

Figure 4 shows that high ability phonic students rely heavily on reading strategies utilizing decoding skills. Although these readers produced above average comprehension scores, these scores were not as high as those in the profile in Figure 3. Three areas in the profile in Figure 4 require instruction in order to develop more effective reading strategies. These areas are semantic acceptability, meaning change, and self-corrections. Readers who do not correct semantic and meaning errors are probably not focusing their attention on the meaning of the passage. More attention should be placed on contextual analysis and activities such as Stauffer's Directed Reading-Thinking Activity which is designed to encourage children to think as they read by having them predict and check their predictions.

Figure 3

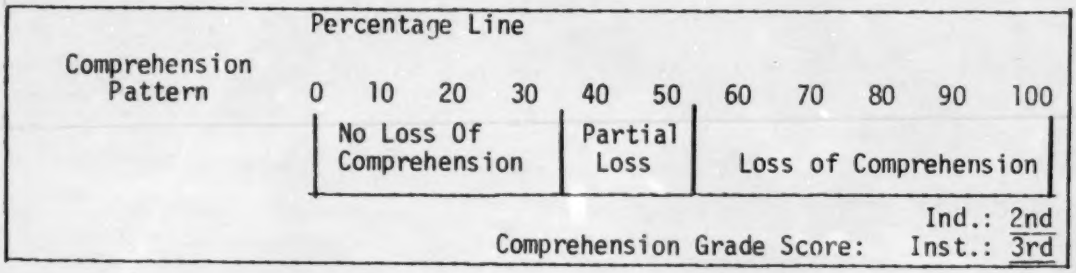


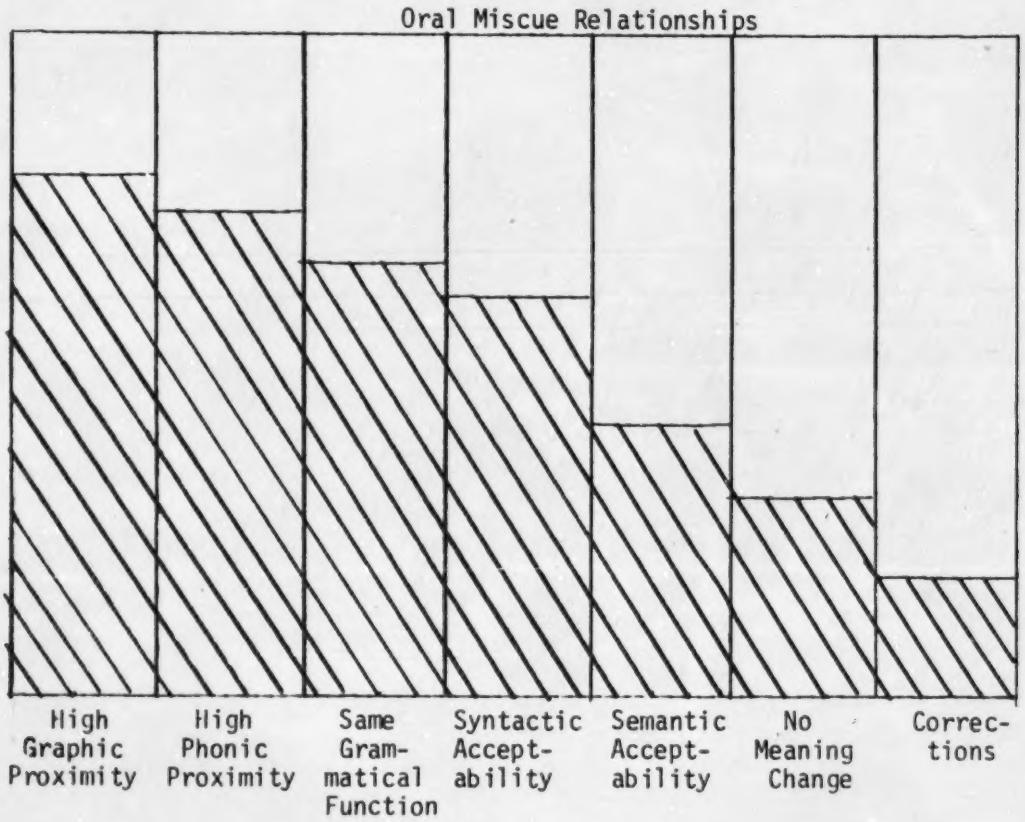


Example of Reading Miscue Inventory Reader Profile

for Highly Effective Eclectic Readers in This Study

Figure 4





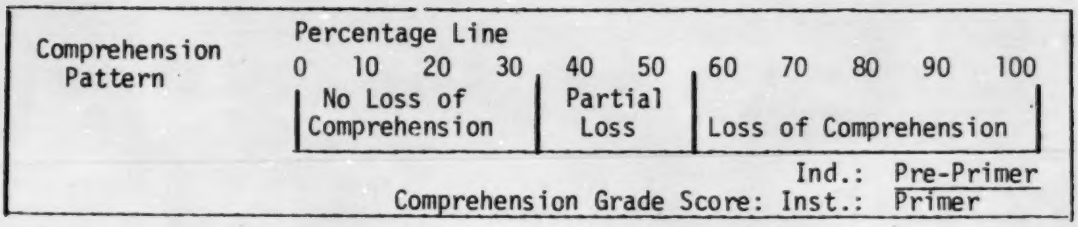
Example of Reading Miscue Inventory Reader Profile for Moderately Effective Phonic Readers in This Study

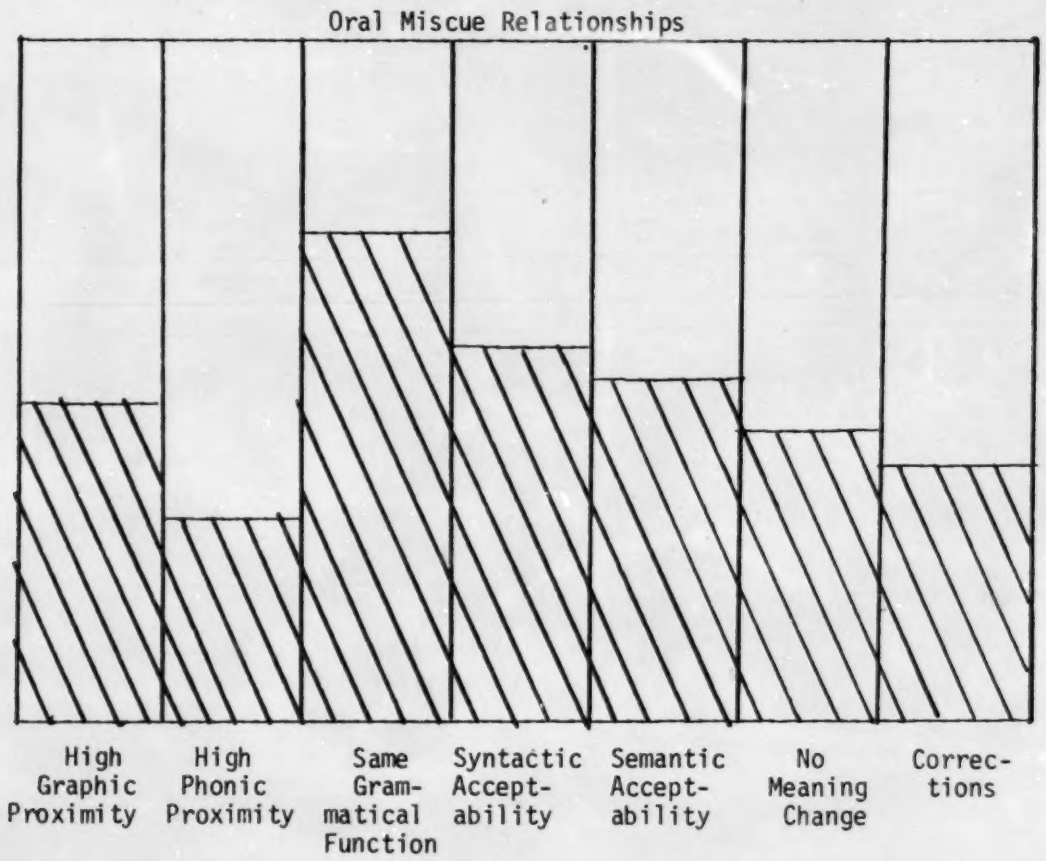
Profiles for low ability readers also illustrate the instructional emphasis of the program. While all low ability readers could be categorized as ineffective readers, the representative reader profiles do provide diagnostic information that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the reading strategies used by the students. Figure 5 shows the average profile developed by the low-ability eclectic readers. These readers display low phonic attack skills, weaker correction strategies and lower comprehension scores. These students may require more structure in their word attack or considerable readiness activities in order to hear and see the minimal differences in words. They are beginning to develop correction strategies which should be encouraged through the use of meaningful materials.

The average profile of the low ability phonic students is very similar to the profile of the high ability phonic students although there is considerable difference in the comprehension reading levels. The profile in Figure 6 shows an overreliance on phonic word attack skills with little concern for the meaning of the passage. These students had a tendency to over correct and would frequently mispronounce a word so it would be closer to the grapho-phonemic relationship of the text word. These students should be exposed to materials that encourage them to understand that reading is a meaningful communication between the author and the reader. Language experience activities in which the child reads his own dictated materials can be very beneficial for the development of this critical understanding. Phonic skills should be combined with contextual analysis so the child does not develop a set strategy for word attack without considering meaning. Heilman (1976) declares that "over reliance on one skill is indefensible." Since these students have a tendency to sound out words, instruction stressing isolated word lists without attention to meaning should not be encouraged.

Reader profiles may be used to provide diagnostic information about the linguistic systems used by children and to make recommendations about instructional approaches and materials that will improve the effective use of all cueing systems. Reader profiles may also be used to evaluate the reading instruction that is occurring in the classroom. If the teacher believes that all the cueing systems are important, he or she may use this analysis to evaluate whether children are receiving instruction which enables them to use these linguistic cues and develop effective reading strategies.

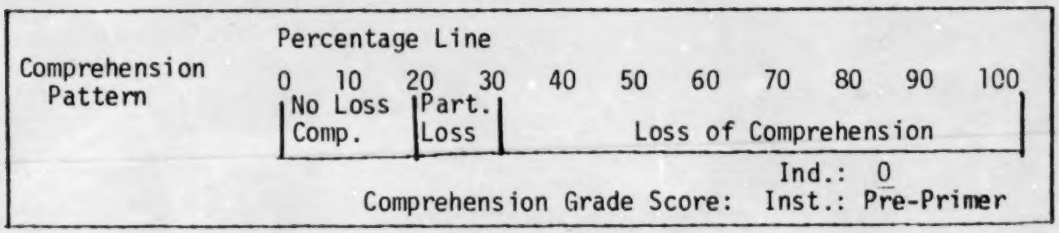
Figure 5

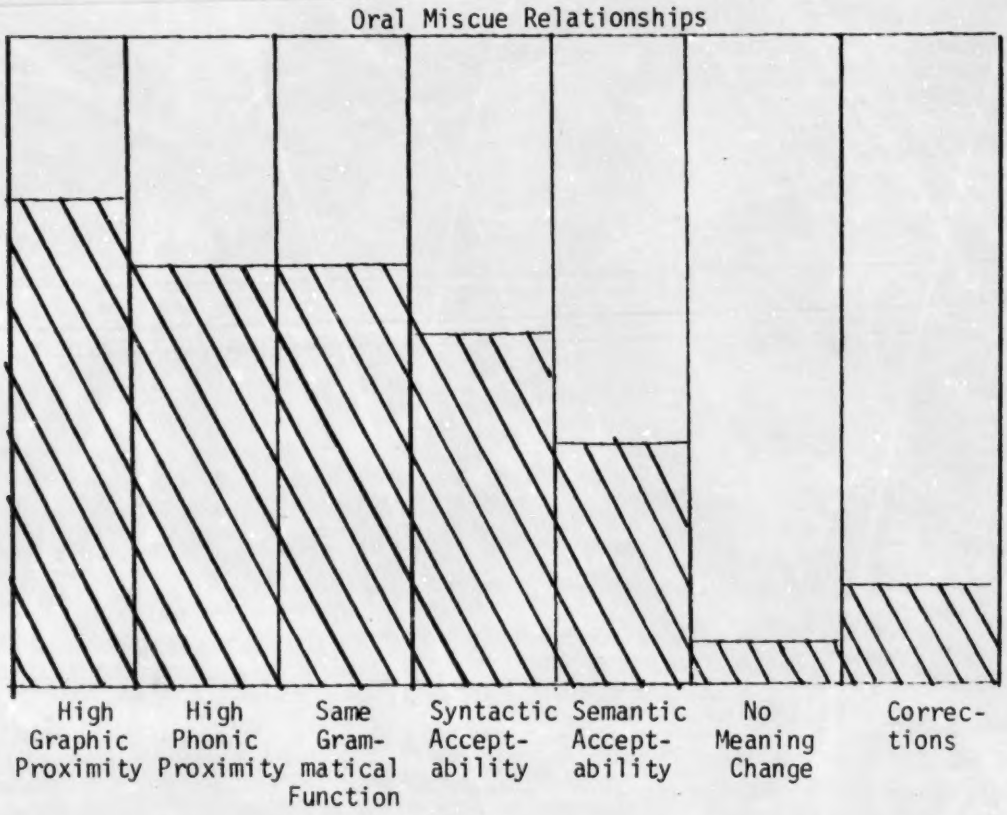




Example of Reading Miscue Inventory Reader Profile for Ineffective Eclectic Readers in This Study

Figure 6





Example of Reading Miscue Inventory Reader Profile for Ineffective Phonic Readers in This Study

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Can We Determine Teacher and Student Theoretical Orientation to Reading?

by

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Dr. Donna Norton's [2] article in this issue indicates that first grade students taught by phonic emphasis or an eclectic reading approach used different strategies of decoding and comprehension during oral reading. An important related study was done by Harste and Burke[1] also using reading miscue inventory techniques.

Their study used an instrument consisting of pupil information cards (Figure 1) where student miscues were marked to reflect a decoding, a skills, and a whole language orientation to reading. Teachers were asked to select the best reader. With this technique and a follow-up interview the authors were able to determine the theoretical orientation of individual teachers. Using an interview form they were also able to determine the student's orientation. A series of open-ended questions pin-pointed whether the student used letters, words or larger than word units as a reading strategy.

Figure 1
Pupil Information Cards

a

I live near this canal.
Men haul things up and
channel
down the canal in big
boats.

b

uc 2. candle 1. ca
I live near this canal.
Men haul things up and
candle
down the canal in big
boats.

c

uc $ 2. cannel 1. ca
I live near this canal.
Men haul things up and
$ cannel
down the canal in big
boats.

Code:

canal = omission

channel
canal = substitution

uc
= Uncorrected miscue

2. cannel
1. ca = first attempt: second attempt

$ = sound like

a. oral reading sample - whole language orientation
b. oral reading sample - skills orientation
c. oral reading sample - decoding orientation

Both Norton's study and that by Harste and Burke indicate that we can determine the teacher's orientation, the pupil's orientation and the total program's orientation concerning decoding and comprehension. Both studies should prove valuable in helping set up reading programs in either individual schools or school systems. It would be possible to develop a consistent primary program by placing teachers of a similar reading orientation in the same building and thus prevent the confusing environment that exists in many schools where a synthetic phonics teacher and a whole-language teacher may be in conflict in the same building. Certainly the serious problem of student mobility in large cities could be alleviated by selecting a specific program and then gradually selecting teachers to meet the needs of the program. We have the knowledge available to overcome the confusion in materials and techniques if we can show school administrators and reading consultants how to use them. The next step for both researchers might be to use these instruments with one school to discover the cohesiveness or inconsistency of a total school.

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Evaluating Children's Reading Strategies: Reading Miscue Inventory and Informal Reading Inventories

by

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Study of children's reading strategies requires examination of instruments used to evaluate these strategies. Two widely used instruments, Informal Reading Inventories (IRI) and Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI), have been examined and applied in previous articles in this issue by Powell and Norton. The author, through a research grant from the Alumni Research and Scholarly Activity Fellowship of the University of Evansville, has conducted several studies concerning the use of these two instruments. The Center for the Application of Reading Miscue Inventory developed as a part of this grant has collected materials and information about reading miscue theory and conducted several action-type research projects designed to study the use of RMI by the classroom teacher.

The studies discussed in this article consider changes in the instruments and their application in the classroom. The first study explores the possibility of improving the accuracy of the IRI by applying some of the techniques developed by RMI. The second study uses the RMI to evaluate children's ability to judge their own reading, and the third examines the possibility of changing teacher's evaluation of children's reading by a study of the theoretical base of the RMI.

The first study attempted to determine if changes in the types of errors counted to determine reading levels by the IRI based on RMI theory would make the IRI more accurate. Informal Reading Inventories quantify children's reading errors during oral reading and using either percent of accuracy or error ratio determine the independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels. Children are then placed in books according to these levels.

Using Goodman and Burke's (1971) Reading Miscue Inventory teachers can evaluate children's reading strategies by examining the relationships among the syntactic, semantic, and graphophonic systems of language. Oral miscues are evaluated on a qualitative basis by this instrument. In this study an effort was made to determine if some qualitative judgment of children's errors on the IRI would make changes in the reading levels assigned by this method.

Seventy-six 200 word samples collected by graduate students giving RMI's to students ranging from grades one through eight were converted to IRI reading levels. Using Powell's (1970) error-ratio method each sample was assigned a level based on the ratio of oral reading errors to the total number of words in each sample. Omissions, insertions, and substitution errors were then examined qualitatively to see if they resulted in any meaning change in the sentence in which they occurred. It was hypothesized that this would change some children's reading levels if those errors not affecting the meaning of the sentence in which they occurred were not counted in figuring the error ratio.

It was found that of the 76 samples used in the study 31 (42%) were placed one or more reading levels higher than those levels determined originally by the IRI. Of these 31 adjusted samples 17 (55%) raised the reading level from the frustration level to the instructional level and 13 (42%) raised the reading level from instructional to independent levels. One sample (3%) raised the assigned reading level two levels (from frustration to independent levels).

It is interesting to note that of the 45 samples that were unchanged when applying qualitative judgment to those errors selected 23 (50%) were already at the independent reading level. Actually, the greatest change in the error ratio occurred in these samples, a fact which supports research which indicates that good readers (all readers are good at their independent level) make numerous insertions and omissions. These errors rarely change the meaning of the text, however.

Examining the change in error ratios it was discovered that the number of errors was reduced approximately 1/3-1/4 by not counting those insertions, omissions and substitutions that did not change the sense of the sentence.

The findings suggest that when we use the Informal Reading Inventory to place children in basal or content area books at their instructional level, we may be placing them in books that are too easy for their level of reading. There is an assumption that children placed in materials at their instructional level learn more than if placed at either their independent or frustration level although the research behind the assumption is limited in scope. A definitive study of the amount of gain made by children placed in books using the correction strategy above and by the traditional IRI needs to be conducted before further conclusions can be drawn.

The second study attempted to discover the congruency between a reader's judgment of his reading skill and actual reading proficiency as measured by the RMI.

Eighty-four students who were given the Reading Miscue Inventory-Short Form were asked to evaluate their reading on a five-point scale from Poor to Excellent. This ranking was then compared to actual reading skill as determined by the Re-telling Score on the RMI. This score is determined by the student's ability to retell a story he has read orally. The RMI-Short Form allows the teacher to ask probing questions after the student has finished un-aided recall. The five-point scale was developed by the author from the categories of reading strategies developed in the original RMI.

Each student's self-ranking was then compared with actual reading skill by counting the number of levels that he missed the actual level, either by over-estimating or underestimating. It was considered significant if a student over-estimated or underestimated his actual reading skill by two levels. The findings are shown below.

FIGURE 1. Comparison of Student Ranking of Reading and Actual Reading Level on RMI Retelling Score

Reading Level RMI-Short Form Retelling Score	Number of Students	Percent Predicting Accurately		Number and Percent Overestimating Reading Levels								Number and Percent Underestimating Reading Levels							
				1		2		3		4		1		2		3		4	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Excellent 80-100 % Comprehension	16	0										6	36	7	44	3	19		
Good 60-79% Comprehension	25	6	24	1	4							6	24	6	24	6	24		
Average 41-59% Comprehension	24	3	12.5	12	50	6	25					3	12.5						
Fair 21-40% Comprehension	11	0		5	46	3	27	2	18			1	9						
Poor 0-20 % Comprehension	8	3	37.5					2	25	3	37.5								
TOTAL	N=84	12	14	18	21	9	11	4	5	3	4	16	20	13	15	9	11	0	0

A study of the percentages indicates that students who were "excellent" comprehenders greatly underestimated their reading ability as measured by this technique. Ten (63%) underestimated by two levels. About 48% of the "good" comprehenders underestimated by two levels. Those readers considering themselves "average" came much closer in their judgment with only 25% overestimating by two levels. "Fair" readers had a tendency to overestimate their ability by two levels (50%). "Poor" readers tended to overestimate their reading skill by two or more levels (53%).

The inability of students to judge their reading ability with any degree of accuracy suggests some interesting possibilities for research of a more sophisticated level. Why do students who are obviously good comprehenders rank themselves as average or fair readers? The author feels that possibly students are getting negative feedback from teachers, parents, and even peers that would influence their concept of "good" reading. In classrooms where the emphasis is on perfect oral reading, the students who may in fact be very effective readers are given a misconception of what good reading is supposed to be. Reading miscue theory would suggest that the reader who strives to make sense out of the text may in fact commit a large number of miscues and still be a very effective reader.

In the classroom, however, the reader is often criticized severely for leaving out or inserting words (although they may not change the meaning of the text). Often teachers and peers are ready to supply the correct word the moment the reader hesitates or makes a mistake. Parents also are prone to judge their children's effectivness by oral reading. Thus, the child may be receiving negative feedback from some very "significant others" about the quality of his reading. Indeed the quickness with which these people correct the reader may prevent him from using his skills in working out unknown words and thus work against skill development in use of the syntactical and semantic clues present in the text.

It is also possible that some children are fooled into thinking that they are good readers when, in reality, they are ineffective. Perfect oral reading without adequate comprehension is prevalent in school systems that consider decoding skills tantamount to skillful reading.

The third study investigated the effect of intensive study of Reading Miscue Inventory on the teacher's conception of the quality of students reading as reflected in factors selected to determine letter grades. Seventy-nine teachers in two graduate courses in reading were asked to list factors that they would consider in awarding letter grades before taking the course in which RMI was taught and then after having received instruction. It was hypothesized that instruction which stressed a psycholinguistic view of reading as presented in the RMI would create a shift away from emphasis on decoding and oral reading as a major factor in grading toward comprehension as the major factor. It was assumed that factors used by teachers in evaluating children's reading was a reflection of their philosophical and theoretical base concerning reading, and that direct instruction would influence these. The change in their understanding of the reading process would in turn be reflected in a change of the factors used in grading student's reading.

Teachers were asked to list factors that they considered in giving letter grades rather than select from a predetermined list because it was felt that this would give more latitude in choices and also reveal some interesting data as to just what was actually used in awarding grades.

The instruction course included approximately 20 hours in the use of Reading Miscue Inventory. Psycholinguistic theory is imbedded in the materials developed for the instrument and teachers were required to give the RMI-Short Form to a student during the course. The RMI asks the teacher to make judgments on the students use of the syntactic, semantic, and meaning-change sections. The major theoretical base of the instrument focuses on the student's use of the structure of English, the context of the sentence as well as graphophonic clues as a part of his reading strategies. Running through all the materials is the theme that "letter-perfect oral reading" is not always good reading and that miscues such as substitutions, insertions, and omissions are not necessarily symptoms of poor reading, especially if they do not change the meaning of the text.

Over thirty different factors used in grading were listed by the teachers. Only those that were listed by 20% or more of the teachers were considered although many of these factors were interesting to analyze. Figure 2 gives the ranking and change in the factors listed.

FIGURE 2. Survey of Factors Used in Grading and Ranking

Rank	Pre-Class	Percent Listing	Rank	Post-Class	Percent Listing
1	Comprehension	75%	1	Comprehension	85%
2	Decoding Skills/Word Attack*	65%	2	Decoding Skills/ Word Attack	60%
3	Informal Tests Workbooks, Basal Tests	50%	3	Informal Testing Workbook Basal Tests	55%
4	Oral Reading	40%	4	Oral Reading	35%
5	Attitude and Interest in Reading	25%	5	Attitude and Interest in Reading	30%

*Almost 80% of the teachers specified "phonics" as word attack skills.

The findings indicate that teachers changed very little in the factors they would use in awarding grades after instruction. There was a very slight change in their ranking of decoding and oral reading, the two areas that one would expect to reflect RMI philosophy. The increase in comprehension could be considered an encouraging trend that might reflect emphasis on the semantic and meaning-change questions asked by the RMI.

Some interesting factors used by teachers to grade reading were noted. About 10% of the teachers listed "whether or not the child was working up to his potential" as measured by reading expectancy formulas as a factor to be used in grading. None

considered growth toward expectancy as important. Other factors that would be difficult to measure included "classroom participation", "speed of silent reading" and "number of books read during recreatory reading".

One might conclude that the media and possibly parents and administrators result in the teacher's heavy emphasis on decoding skills when considering children's progress and grading. Possibly it is easier to quantify work in these skills and, therefore, easier to determine grades.

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How Prepared Are Teachers To Teach Strategies?

by

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With the clarion call of "accountability," "back to basics," and "competency based education" sounding across the length and breadth of the nation, many teachers are reorganizing and redirecting the reading instruction they provide. Specific reading skills, particularly those classified as word attack skills, are receiving more direct attention in terms of both instruction and assessment.

Such a redirection of reading instruction if carried too far may result in the creation of counter-productive situation. We may find more and more instructional programs oriented toward teaching and measuring specific reading skills ability rather than how well and in how much depth the pupils understand and enjoy what they read. We may produce a generation of children who are skill proficient but reading poor.

One of the areas among the first to be included in any competency based approach is the area of word attack skills. One facet of word attack, phonics, appears to receive the lions share of attention in the professional literature, in commercially published reading programs, and in actual reading instruction in the classroom. If this much emphasis is to be placed on phonics, the question, "How proficient are the teachers in using and applying the phonics skills they teach?" may justifiably be asked. In addition, if teachers are found to be less than proficient in the utilization and application of phonic skills, are they really prepared to instruct students in strategies for using phonics to unlock the pronunciation of words?

In an effort to answer these questions 292 experienced elementary teachers, grades K-6, completed a diagnostic, entry level, word attack utilization test. At the time of the survey the teachers comprising the population were living and teaching in a three state area in the midwest. Their undergraduate training represented schools nationwide. A redistribution of the subjects by grade level taught revealed the following:

kindergarten teachers	N = 18
grade 1 teachers	N = 49
grade 2 teachers	N = 45
grade 3 teachers	N = 62
grade 4 teachers	N = 41
grade 5 teachers	N = 39
grade 6 teachers	N = 38

Individual responses to individual survey items were tabulated by grade levels taught and a percentage of utilization was computed for each item at each level. A score of 80% correct response was selected as indicating mastery.

The diagnostic test included more than eleven items concerned with phonics and, in addition, included other word attack skills. However, for consistency only the results of the phonic items are reported at this time. Furthermore, although there were more than eleven items, because of the nature of the items the responses could be grouped in eleven areas.

The analysis of the teachers' responses concerning specific aspects of phonics revealed the following:

1. Modality for teaching phonics. Phonics is primarily an auditory skill. Many reading educators would agree if the student cannot auditorally discriminate sounds in our language the value of phonics is questionable. Yet the majority of the respondents in this diagnostic situation stated they would probably develop the visual before the auditory.

The mastery scores for developing the auditory before the visual ranged from 34.21% at the sixth grade level to 53.06% at the first grade level.

2. Long vowel sounds. All grade groups achieved the 80% mastery level when identifying words containing the long sounds of vowels. Mastery scores ranged from 82.22% for the kindergarten teachers to 99.49% for the fifth grade teachers.

3. Short vowel sounds. The identification of words containing the short sounds of the vowels was found to be more difficult for the teachers than the long vowel sounds. Mastery scores ranged from 87.89% for the sixth grade to 95.90% for the fifth grade teachers. The kindergarten teachers with a score of 65.56% was the only group not achieving the 80% mastery level.

4. Vowel sound in a closed syllable. The closed syllable was identified as a vowel followed by a consonant at the end of a syllable. The respondents were asked to identify the appropriate vowel sound (short) and state a rationale for the sound. Although the respondents were more successful when identifying vowel sound than when stating a rationale, no group achieved the 80% mastery level. Scores ranged from 59.18% for the first grade group to 68.55% for the third grade teachers.

5. Vowel sound in an open syllable. The open syllable was identified as a syllable ending with a vowel. Respondents were asked to identify the appropriate vowel sound (long) and state a rationale for the sound. Again the respondents were more adept at identifying the appropriate sound than stating a rationale. Mastery scores ranged from 36.11% for the kindergarten group to 70.00% for the second grade teachers.

6. Vowel digraphs and diphthongs. The respondents encountered some difficulty when asked to identify vowel digraphs and diphthongs as they appeared in words. No grade group achieved the 80% mastery level. Scores ranged from 37.11% for the kindergarten group to 59.22% for the fourth grade teachers.

7. Most frequent sound in a vowel digraph. Given a nonsense word containing a vowel digraph all grade groups scored above the 80% mastery level in identifying the sound for the first vowel as long and stating second vowel would probably be silent. Mastery scores for the first vowel sound ranged from 83.33% for the

kindergarten teachers to 100.00% for the fourth grade teachers. Mastery level scores for the second vowel sound ranged from 89.74% for the sixth grade group to 97.56% for the fourth grade teachers.

The teachers were then asked to state a rationale for this sound combination. Only the second grade teachers with a score of 84.44% were above the 80% mastery level. The scores for the other grade groups ranged from 61.11% for the kindergarten teachers to 79.48% for the fifth grade teachers. (This latter score was so close it should be considered mastery.)

It was interesting to note that the teachers who did state a rationale for this vowel sound combination did so in a variety of ways. Not uncommon was the time-worn mnemonic, "When two vowels go walking the first one does the talking."

8. Consonant digraphs and blends. Difficulty was encountered when the respondents were asked to identify consonant digraphs and blends as they appeared in words. No group achieved the 80% mastery level. Scores ranged from 47.61% for the kindergarten teachers to 74.29% for the second grade group. Furthermore, the respondents encountered more difficulty with consonants digraphs and blends appearing in the medial or final position in words.

9. Hard and soft sounds of C and G. As a group the second grade teachers was the only group to achieve mastery, 80.55%, in identifying the hard and soft sounds of C and G as they appeared in words. Scores for the other grade groups ranged from 63.89% for the kindergarten teachers to 79.03% for the third grade teachers. (This latter score was probably close enough to be considered mastery level.)

10. R-controlled vowel sounds. The sounds represented by the r-controlled vowel was found to be the third most difficult item in the diagnostic test. Scores ranged from 27.78% for the kindergarten teachers to 50.00% for the fifth grade teachers.

11. Analytic vs. synthetic approach in teaching phonics. Although this may be viewed as more theoretical than practical, the respondents were asked to differentiate between the analytic and synthetic approaches to teaching phonics. This was found to be more difficult for the teachers than any other aspect of the diagnostic test. Mastery scores ranged from 28.08% for the sixth grade group to 48.22% for the kindergarten teachers.

Summary and Implications:

From the results of this study it would appear that in terms of application of phonic skills, the typical teacher, at least those included in this sample, have reached the mastery level in terms of long and short vowel sounds and "when two vowels go walking . . ." In the other aspects of phonic understanding and application measured here the respondents were something less than proficient. In fact, in some instances both confusion and lack of understanding were observed.

A frequent comment made by the teachers in this study was that they know well only those skills taught at their grade level. If this were to be considered a true statement, the results of this study would indicate that at each grade level,

instruction is being provided basically in vowel sounds. Such a comment might also be viewed as possibly indicating some lack of preparation for meeting the wide range of individual differences of children in a classroom at any grade level.

Through observation and from the respondent's comments and questions some problems, in addition to direct phonic application, were discovered. On two items respondents frequently confused working in rows with working in columns. Confusions and reversals with terminology occurred with vowel digraphs and diphthongs, consonant digraphs and blends, and when contrasting the analytic and synthetic approaches. A rather large number of the respondents demonstrated difficulty in following directions in general.

Differentiating between the analytic and synthetic approaches to teaching phonics was found to be the most difficult item for the respondents. Mastery scores on this item were the lowest of any items for the first, third, fifth, and sixth grade teachers.

In post-test discussions the majority of the subjects stated that they were not aware that the phonics instruction in most commercially published reading materials was based on one or the other of these two approaches. Furthermore, the subjects stated they were unaware of the confusion that could possibly develop when children were placed in a basal series utilizing one approach along with supplementary materials employing the other approach.

The second weakest area for the subjects was the idea that phonic skills should be developed first through the auditory modality. Perhaps the abundance of printed materials foster the visual first approach.

In follow-up discussions teachers who changed to the auditory approach mentioned observing improvement in the interest, attitude, and ability of students when working with phonics.

Due to the nature of this study and the size of the sample it would not appear appropriate to generalize these findings to all teachers. However, there are some questions raised by this current report.

If teachers really have the degree of difficulty with the application and utilization of phonics indicated here, are they:

1. prepared to provide effective instruction in both phonic elements and the application of these elements to unlock the pronunciation of words in a reading situation.

2. prepared to provide for the wide variety of individual differences of pupils frequently present in most classrooms.

Does the difficulty encountered by the teachers in this situation reflect:

1. that through a lack of frequent use these elements have been forgotten.

2. that the teachers rely too heavily on commercially published materials

and programs and consequently have not become totally aware of what they are teaching.

3. that the teachers are reflecting inadequate preparation at both the pre-service and inservice levels in both knowledge of phonic skills and their application in terms of word attack strategies.

In conclusion it would appear that if teachers are to be expected to instruct students in the use of phonics as a strategy for word attack the teachers need to be better prepared in both the knowledge and utilization of these skills.

Future Based Reading Strategies: Preparing for What Lies Ahead

by

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"What will the future bring?, "What will the world be like in the year 2000?" Philosophers, theorists and educators have continually pondered these and similar questions. Often predictions were made accurately. Just as often, man has been startled by the complexity and rapidity of change brought about by increased knowledge and technology. Educators, singularly among all who prophesize, have the least margin for error. We have the responsibility of preparing youth to function adequately in the future.

We live in the present. Our system of education, therefore, is understandably a reflection of current societal and cultural phenomena. Curricular priorities often reflect that which is most important to society at a given time. Yet, educators suggest that the basic purpose of education is to prepare youth for the future. Our current methods of reading instruction may not be fulfilling that purpose. Projecting future needs into the classroom of today is one manner in which that purpose can conceivably and realistically be accomplished. Toward that end, a recognition of future needs is necessary. Such a recognition, when based upon predictions and anticipated student needs, will yield more appropriate instructional directions. Educators need not be totally prophetic when making those determinations. Our culture is providing us with some clear indications of what our world will be like in the future. Advancing technology, the emergence of alternate methods of transportation, energy and economic crises and the concern for the rights of women and minorities are but a few examples of cultural phenomena which have the potential to drastically alter our lifestyles and subsequent educational needs.

Perhaps the most dramatic indication in terms of education has occurred in the area of reading education. The present state of the art of teaching reading consists primarily of approaches which originated decades ago. These approaches are based upon sound theory, have been supported by research, and refined through continual use. The potential effectiveness of these approaches has been satisfactorily demonstrated, therefore it is not that which I now question. I question why, although student capabilities and competencies have not diminished, there exists large numbers of students for whom reading instruction is an uninteresting, frustrating and unsuccessful experience. The answer is most likely found in a combination of occurrences which, again, reflect cultural changes.

Alternatives to the print medium have begun to replace, to a degree, the method by which we gather, process and store information. There is also a diminished need to learn to read. Literacy, although still desirable by the

majority, is no longer an absolute necessity for survival. We, as reading educators, are rapidly approaching an era which may require a redefinition of literacy; one that includes a child's competencies and abilities to use alternatives to print. In addition, placing importance upon the ability to read represents a component of a value system employed by adults which may not apply to the future needs of the students. Individuals possess an intrinsic curiosity about the future. There is also a high degree of motivation in all persons to prepare for that future. In light of this, the total relevance of the reading curriculum toward these self-recognized future needs is diminished. The reflection which educators see of these phenomena is a growing indifference on the part of the student toward learning to read.

What, then, does constitute relevancy for the future? A few of the personal predictions of the author are listed below. These do not represent arbitrary conjectures. They were formed by observing the signals and clues of our culture, and represent changes which need to be incorporated into the reading curriculum at all levels of instruction. Certainly, all reading educators could easily contribute their own predictions to this list.

1. Comprehending cultural differences such as race, religion, poverty.

2. 'Reading' or demonstrating 'literacy' with mediums other than print; (visual literacy).

3. Comprehending the vocabulary of the future. (We have already added many words to our vocabulary which did not exist prior to this decade.)

4. Comprehending the myriad of foreign language expressions which has been injected into our language due to the increased communication, travel opportunities and the meshing of cultures.

5. The need for each person to be eclectic; to know for oneself the basics of nutrition, medicine, law and philosophy. This follows the trend toward independence in all life skills.

Instructional units for these ideas are not difficult to prepare. They can esily be adapted to most existing reading programs and approaches. The directed reading lesson format lends itself well to these topics because of the degree of discussion and experiential referrants involved. Language experience is another method which will complement these curricular priorities.

Implementation of these curricular components will require more than than just their identification. Beyond the initial recognition of potential future needs, it is necessary that new and varied and relevant materials be brought into the classroom. Examples include: newspapers, speakers, experts and television. Educators must reexamine the importance of, and utilize to a greater degree, the external, incidental learning which occurs outside of the

classroom, as well as the added dimension of periodic review and reprediction of student needs. Most importantly, for the purpose of reading instruction effectiveness, there must be more focus on inferential and critical comprehension skills at all levels. It is through our complete understanding of the immediate present that we recognize implications for the future.

Each time an appeal is extended that education move "back to the basics," the suggestion is being made that we cease to be progressive and innovative, and that we ignore the future needs of students. Educators have not been mandated to the position of followers. We can assume leadership in our society by pointing our curricula toward the directions our culture and lives will take. Implementing future based reading strategies is a progressive movement toward insuring that the individual can embrace with confidence that which lies ahead.

Guarantying Understanding Between Teachers and Students

by

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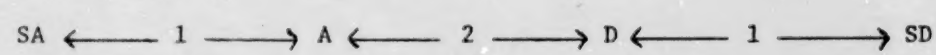
The activity described below is just what the title implies. After about 45 minutes, the activity does guaranty that the teacher and students will have a much better understanding of the thinking, perception, and educational philosophy of the other. In particular, the students will understand the attitude and beliefs of the teacher, and the teacher will have a much clearer understanding of the students' perceptions of the teacher's thinking. In essence, the students are asked to predict the teacher's thinking.

The teacher writes on the board (or projects a transparency) a statement. The teacher privately determines if he/she strongly agrees, agrees, disagrees, or strongly disagrees with the statement. Meanwhile each student independently predicts the teacher's reaction to the statement. It is important that the teacher and each student commit the response or prediction to paper by recording a SA, A, D, or SD on a record sheet. This recording forces each person to make a decision and prevents anyone from changing answers after the fact. It is crucial that the students understand that they are predicting what the teacher believes; not what the student believes about the statement.

The scoring may appear to be more complicated than it really is. After all have committed themselves to an answer, the teacher calls for a show of hands for each prediction. That is, the teacher asks for, and records, the number of students who predicted the teacher would respond by strongly agreeing, agreeing, etc. Then the teacher discloses his/her actual response to the statement. The scoring is based on the inaccuracy of the students' predictions. The following sketch is used as the scoring guide.



For example, if the teacher agreed with the statement, a student who had predicted a strongly agree would be off one point. A student who has predicted strongly disagree would be off three points. Those who had correctly predicted agree would be off zero points. The more points off, the greater the discrepancy between the prediction and the response. The easiest way for a teacher to proceed is to ask for the number of students who predicted strongly agree, calculate the total points off for that category; then ask for the number of students who predicted agree, calculate the total points off for that category, etc. Then get the grand total for the statement. The scoring system is based on the belief that the difference between agree and disagree is a greater distance than between strongly agree and agree and greater than the distance between disagree and strongly disagree.

After the total scoring for a given statement has been determined, there will be a strong temptation by the teacher to discuss her/his response. Some form of

psychology works on the students who are eager to explain their predictions. Give in to the temptations! Perhaps the greatest value of the activity is in the discussion that inevitably follows each scoring session.

After one statement has been responded to, predicted, scored, and discussed, go on to the next statement. Follow this procedure until all statements have been dealt with, or the time for the activity has elapsed, or the teacher decides that the basic objectives have been met.

Frequently some of the statements will need clarifying before the response and predictions. Some words, such as some or many, need defining. The teacher can lead a discussion for clarification, but should take care not to reveal the response in the discussion.

As a guide in determining the class' total understanding of the teacher's thinking, the following scheme is offered. We should understand that the more students there are in class, the greater will be the total points off. For a class to be quite accurate in prediction, the total points off per statement should be equal to or less than half the number of students. Thus if there are 30 students in class their total points off should be 15 or fewer to be considered as extremely accurate The following formulas can serve as a general guide to the class' accuracy in prediction.

N = number of students

Total Points Off	Accuracy
less than $N \div 2$ =	extremely accurate
less than N =	accurate
less than $N + \frac{N}{2}$ =	fair
less than 2N =	poor
more than 2N =	total strangers

The teacher can determine the degree of accuracy for each statement as the activity proceeds (better yet enlist the aid of a student), or determine the score after the activity has been completed. The usual pattern is for the scores to be relatively poor at the start, then to improve as the activity continues. If this occurs, you have evidence that the students are increasing their understanding of the teacher's thinking. A prudent teacher may record the results of each statement and try to determine any patterns in the students' thinking. It may be that they are consistently off in one area of statements and consistently accurate in another area of statements and consistently accurate in another area. This would be information worth learning.

This activity is appropriate for any age and for any subject area. It should prove useful to do the activity fairly early in the school year and then later to see if the students have increased their understanding of the teacher's thinking over time.

Two challenges are posed for creative teachers. Seek to develop a scoring system whereby a teacher can predict the students' predictions. This could be quite useful toward increasing a teacher's understanding of the students' perceptions. A second challenge is to adapt the general approach to a particular subject matter content.

It would be fairly simple to have students work in pairs and predict each other's attitudinal responses to a subject. Perhaps they could also work with correct answers to content questions. Maybe a great review game is in the making.

The following statements are offered as suggestions on which to base the activity. Everyone should feel free to delete any, alter the wording, or add additional statements. This activity has proven to be quite beneficial. You are encouraged to try it--or a variation of it.

1. Most students will cheat if given the opportunity.
2. Many teachers basically don't really like kids.
3. Most teachers don't appreciate how much work other teachers give students.
4. Students are more concerned about learning than in making good grades.
5. Teachers should be strong disciplinarians.
6. Students really don't mind doing homework.
7. Teachers frequently resent administrative rules that they have to follow.
8. Students are basically lazy.
9. Students will work hard if they see a good reason for it (other than grades).
10. Most teachers do very little school work outside of school hours.
11. Parents are more concerned with the grades their children make than in what really goes on in school.
12. Students are more interested in social activities and friendships than in academic concerns.
13. Parents should have more say about what goes on in a classroom.
14. Most teachers would rather work with fast learners rather than slow learners.
15. Most students really do like school.